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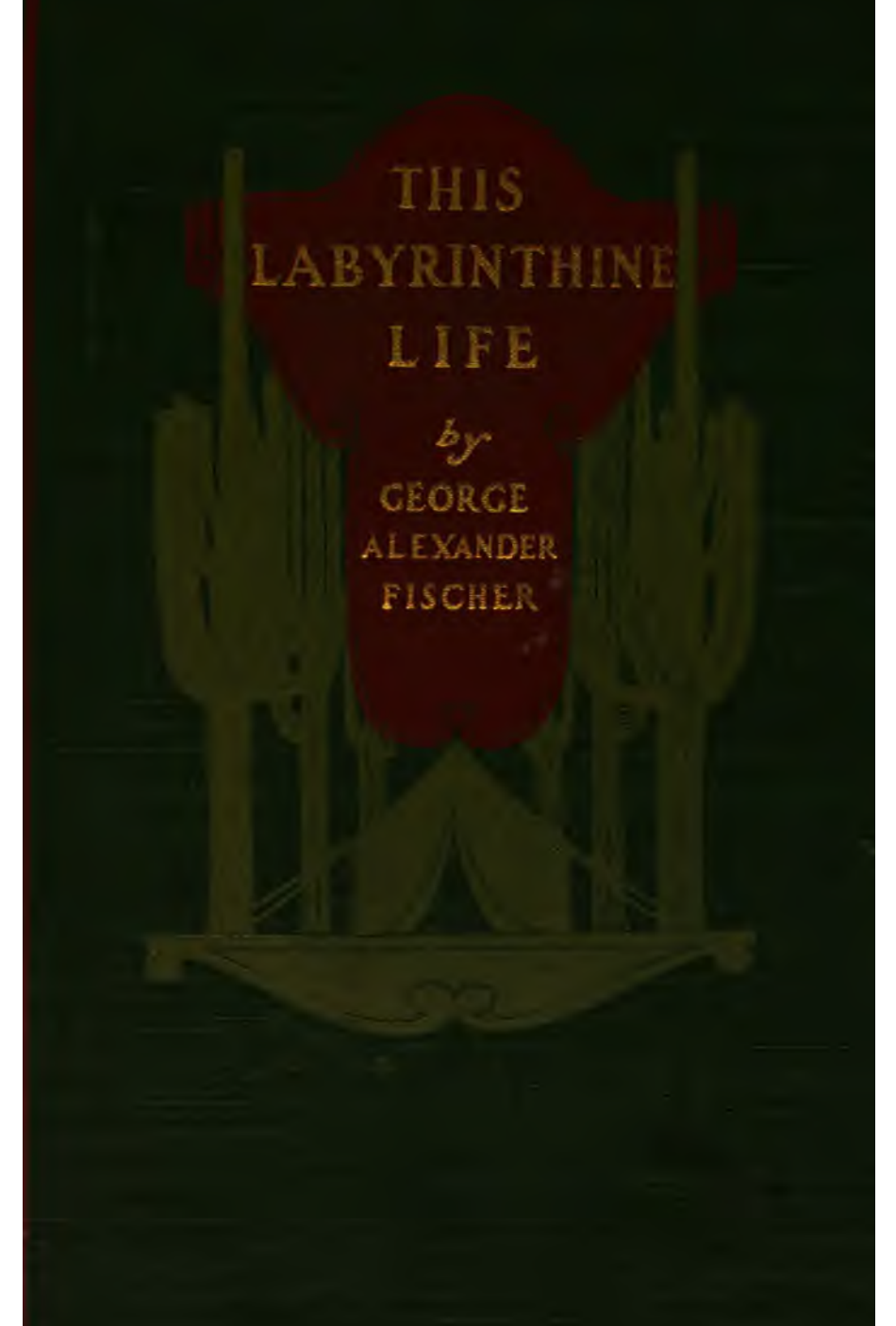
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In the midst loomed up the giant cacti.

This Labyrinthine Life

A TALE OF THE ARIZONA DESERT

BY

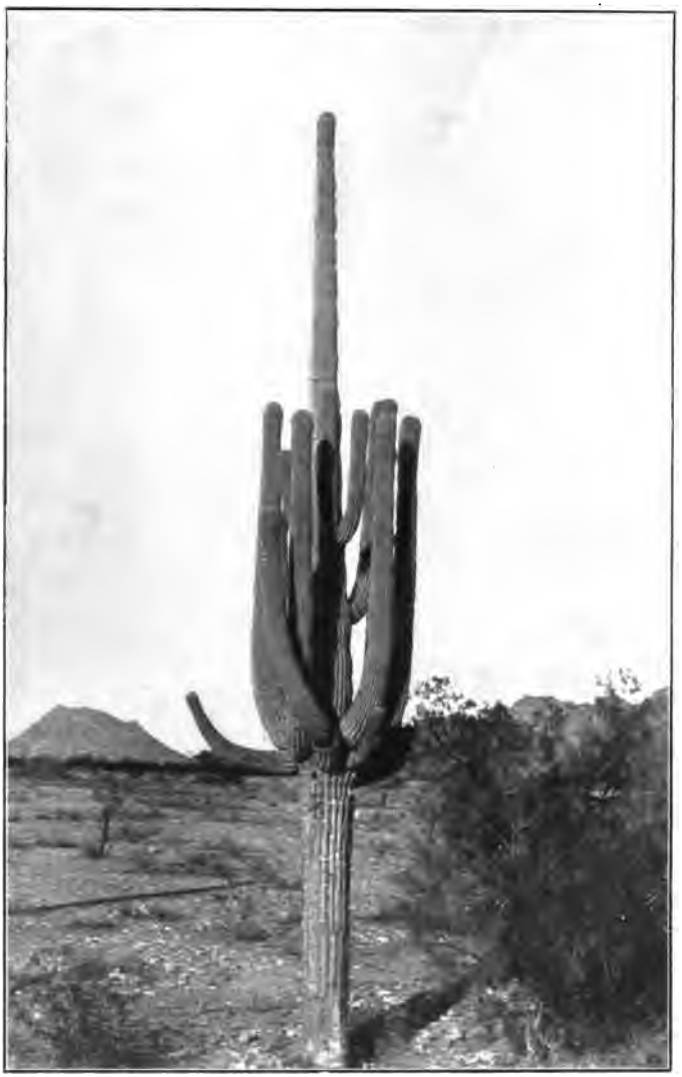
GEORGE ALEXANDER

Author of

BEETHOVEN: A CHARACTER

. . . be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony—
GEORGE ELIOT: *The Choir Invisible.*

B. W. DODGE & CO.
NEW YORK :::::::::::::: 1907



In the midst loomed up the giant cacti.

This Labyrinthine Life

A Tale of the Arizona Desert

BY

GEORGE ALEXANDER FISCHER

Author of

BEETHOVEN: A CHARACTER STUDY

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The cup of strength in some great agony—

GEORGE ELIOT: *The Choir Invisible.*

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FOREWORD

We have as yet no conception of the importance of the desert from the point of view of health. We know to some extent what it means to the tuberculous, but it means still more to the overworked, the unhappy, those on the verge of nervous prostration, professional men after a particularly hard siege—those who in any manner have drawn too heavily on their nerve force. It is the place where even in a short sojourn one grows younger, given favoring conditions.

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This Labyrinthine Life

CHAPTER I

"WHAT'S Branscombe's little game anyway? To think of a man in good health planking himself down in a lungers' camp on the desert when he doesn't have to! If he were caring for a sick wife or other relative it would be different. He makes me tired."

The question was propounded by Arthur White, president of the Lungers' Association of Arizona, a local organization formed for purely social purposes, eligibility to which was restricted to males of the age of twenty-one or over having defective lungs. For obvious reasons, initiatory ceremonies in the L. A. A., by which abbreviation the Club was usually referred to, were postponed pending the recovery of the applicant, an outcome confidently looked forward to by each individual member.

The better to facilitate this desired consummation, a huge reward of merit, beautifully engrossed by one of the occupants of the Camp,

containing many flourishes, and made up largely of "whereases" and "wherefores," was offered as a prize to the first club-member recovering to the extent of enabling him to undertake some occupation as a means of making a livelihood.

There were a few ineligibles in the Camp, robust, healthy individuals, usually one of a married couple, husband or wife, who had accompanied the invalid to the desert country. With an assumption of it being a great deprivation, these were rigidly debarred from all participation in the proceedings of the Club. On the approach of one of these derelicts, even though the others were discussing the most commonplace topics, an ostentatious lowering of the voice, an air of mystery extravagantly assumed, conveyed an intimation to these healthy ones of being in the minority, of exclusion from privileges confined solely to the others. It was a good example of the all-pervading Western humor, and of the ready adaptation of the newcomer to it.

The situation of the invalid on the Arizona desert, thousands of miles from home and family, grappling with a disease like consumption, generally with insufficient means, would not seem to be one from which humor could easily be evolved; yet it came to the surface constantly among them, often on the slightest provocation. Though the

Great Enemy hovered near, sometimes indeed coming perilously close following on some slight imprudence, his presence was ignored. Though the spectre sat at the feast—perhaps because of his very proximity—this lightsomeness came all the more to be indulged in.

The wisdom of this course was apparent. By treating the subject humorously, the disease was robbed of half its terrors. The very fact that there were a number of them associated together, all in the same predicament, begat confidence. They realized, even here, that strength lies in union. In thus giving expression to their sense of humor they showed how heroically they could rise superior to fate.

Or it may have been a defiance of fate; a reprisal to the Enemy for what they had endured; a meeting of the Bony Scytheman face to face without cringing, now that recovery seemed possible; a casting back—an assertion that the victim had risen superior to former conditions and was to be terrorized no more. In furtherance of this sentiment, they had even elected White, the wag of the Camp, to the post of Chief Undertaker, on account of the attitude of solemnity he was able to assume on occasion, and the threat, "White'll get you yet if you don't look out," was always potent to prevent a contemplated imprudence.

Nicknames were served around impartially, usually with a humorous application. Thus, Mr. Hargrave Jamison, of Boston, a man of family, sedate and dignified, as became that condition in a company made up largely of bachelors—who went about with an air like that of a Supreme Court judge, soon came to be called "Jimmy" by some of the leading spirits of the Club.

It was an aggregation of campers, not an organized camp. The spot they were on was uncultivated land, hence desert, overgrown with sagebrush and mesquite. It had the advantage of being not far from the terminus of the car line. Water, that great necessity in a dry land, had to be carried an eighth of a mile.

Though the health-seekers had come from every part of the country, all strangers to each other on arriving, the comradery engendered by camp life, soon made them feel like old friends, and it was not long before little paths were worn from tent to tent. True, when they called, they usually came for something—either requiring advice about cooking, being for the most part unused to housekeeping mysteries, or to borrow something that they lacked for the meal they were preparing, but it is only justice to them to add that they made it a point to return whatever they came for, whether it was advice or groceries.

This comradery, this spirit of helpfulness toward, and dependence on, one another, which made the life pleasanter for each, was largely due to the initiative of a woman, a Mrs. Williams, who had come to Arizona with her husband on account of his health, and whose tact and ability in promoting a kindly feeling one to the other, were frequently exercised. She initiated the teachable ones into the mysteries of cooking; the helpless she invited frequently to her own table, and soon came to be regarded as the Dean of the Camp.

They were sunning themselves in front of one of the larger tents, sitting about on boxes or stools, resting after the exertion of preparing breakfast. They were mostly young fellows under thirty, although a few were verging on middle age.

"Something's back of it," said John Stevenson, with an air of having exclusive knowledge up his sleeve, which was now to be disclosed. "It's something other than a desire to commune with Nature that has driven him out here, you bet!" Then, after a pause to make the announcement more impressive: "He's been disappointed in some girl! That's what's the matter with him. Your Uncle Dudley don't carry his eyes in the back of his head."

"Who told you?"

"No one told me, but that's the way it always

is in books when they turn their backs on their kind. It's always a girl," wound up Stevenson.

" It can't be a girl, Stevie," said White, with an air of finality. White was a man of many moods, imaginative to the last degree, influenced by his susceptibilities in myriads of different directions—so impressionable that he was apt to adopt for the time being the prevailing characteristics of any prominent figure, whether in fiction or in real life, that happened to take his fancy. Just now his rôle was that of a cynic. " It can't be a girl; when a man gets to be forty, he don't go to no desert on account of a girl. He's got over that kind of thing by that time, you bet! You'll have to guess again, Stevie."

" Perhaps he's the mysterious benefactor who's putting down the well, and is going to pipe the water to our tents."

A shout of derision greeted this sally, and cries of, " That's likely," and " Not he! " indicated the degree of popularity in which Branscombe was held in the Camp.

" I'd be more likely to take him for a mysterious malefactor hiding from justice," said White melodramatically. " He may be a forger using our Camp for a shelter."

" It can't exactly be said to be our Camp, since he was here ahead of any of us; in reality, it is

we that have butted in on him," said Stevenson. "Give him a show, boys."

"Why did he want us to take him for a lunger," rejoined White, "if he's on the square? It brings us back to the original proposition: What's he here for at all if he isn't a lunger?"

"I wouldn't wonder," said Fillmore impressively, in a good imitation of White's melodramatic manner, "I wouldn't wonder if he should turn out to be a hold-up man; the leader of the gang that holds up the gambling places here."

"Yes!" added Stevenson, lowering his voice and also imitating White's manner as nearly as possible. "That would account for his living on the desert, and for not being a lunger, which seems to be his greatest iniquity, and also for his having plenty of money. You've struck it, laddie!"

"He was out all last night," said another mysteriously. "Told some one he was going to see the play and would stay at the hotel overnight. How do we know where he was? This talk about the play may have been a blind to throw us off the track."

"Has anyone seen this morning's paper yet?" asked Stevenson significantly. "Wonder if anything occurred last night; anything in the way of a murder or a hold-up?"

"It certainly looks suspicious," murmured another, "his wanting to see a play. Something ought to be done about it."

"Got a gun, Willie? I shall sleep with one eye open hereafter until we know more about this."

"All right, you fellows," rejoined White gloomily. "Go on kidding, but perhaps you'll find out in the end that I'm right. Why does he keep so much to himself? Why don't he tell us something about himself? If he's all right, why doesn't he act like it? Why isn't he friendly to us? That's what I'd like to know."

"Whitey, my boy," said Stevenson, patting him on the shoulder, "you were never intended for tragedy. Keep to comedy and you'll suit us first-rate."

They were generally from the better walks of life. White was a journalist, and had been on the reportorial staff of one of the large Chicago papers. Fillmore was a physician, Stevenson a bookkeeper. Some had been in business; all had been compelled, with the progress of their disease, to give up their work, and the income that went with it.

In their dress they affected the costume of the ranchman or cowboy, as usually depicted on the stage, except that they carried no bowie-knives or

revolvers in belt or boot-leg. Not that they did not have them. As a matter of fact, there were about as many weapons as men in the Camp. These had been brought along from the East, often the parting gift of some friend, who, while thinking that he was doing the correct thing in the premises, was totally unaware that in the possibilities suggested, the invalid came near giving up the trip altogether. Fortunately, they discovered soon after their arrival that the gun is as much of a superfluity in Arizona to men of their class, as it is in Union Square, or on Boston Common, so they wisely left them in their trunks.

Their garb ran largely to corduroy trousers, gray flannel shirts, and broad-brimmed, gray felt hats with leather bands. The carved leather band appeared to be one of the essentials of the equipment; from the uniform use that was made of it, talismanic powers might have been predicated for it. Elk-hide shoes, in color resembling the dust of the street, completed the costume.

No greater compliment could have been paid these men than to mistake them for ranchmen. The make-up of some of them was indeed so good as to give the impression to the uninitiated, of being native to the soil; and it was one of the things that helped them to get away from their

invalidism, that went a long way toward recovery, that they no longer looked the part of invalid, thanks to the healthful outdoor life, the sound sleep, the feeling of well-being imparted by the dry stimulating atmosphere and the sunshine. Although their forms were spare,—the bronzed cheek, the bright eye, the frequent laugh, the occasional whistle, bespoke returning health, or the expectation of it.

Some, it is true, were destined never to get well, and most of them knew they would never be as robust as before. They realized that in all likelihood they would have to remain in the Southwest, except for an occasional visit "home," and that it would be necessary to be always "careful." Notwithstanding, an atmosphere of optimism prevailed instead of the depression commonly associated in the popular mind as existing in a place made up largely of invalids.

It was inspiriting to hear a yell proceeding from some young fellow on emerging from his tent after dressing in the morning, whose dejected demeanor on first coming to the Camp the previous autumn was evidence enough that he had come to Arizona as a last resource. One would hardly think his case had been desperate to note the abandon with which he would shout at the top of his voice, as if testing his lung capacity.

It was characteristic of each, that, while yet at home, they had intuitively stopped making plans for the future, the invariable mental reservation, "if I live," dampening all ardor and interest in the matter,—they now, with one accord, talked as if they had years ahead of them in which to do things. All in all, it was not an unpleasant experience, this camp life on the desert. They had begun it with dread and apprehension, but many of them came to enjoy it.

They had, for the most part, but little or no means of their own, relying on small remittances from home, or a sick benefit fund from some fraternal organization on which to live. With most, the knowledge that they were consumptive had come as a complete surprise—something wholly unexpected. Their experiences in this respect were quite similar. A little more fatigue after exertion than formerly, perhaps some falling off in the body-weight, appetite not quite so good. With some, the climax had come through a hemorrhage, but more commonly through a casual visit to a physician, whose trained senses had led to a discovery of the presence of the disease. From henceforth their whole mode of life had been revolutionized. The various plans, some on the eve of fulfilment, were now to be abandoned. If married (some of the married ones had but

recently assumed the new responsibility) the shock was all the greater.

"That windstorm yesterday was tough. It's a good thing they come so seldom here. Arizona wouldn't be much of a health resort if we had this to reckon with often."

The speaker was a serious-looking young fellow, called the Deacon, who had just joined the group. He had a pathetic look of longing in his face, which all knew was acquired by having been compelled to leave his wife behind in the Eastern city. He was a musician by profession, and had married one of his promising scholars. In knowledge of the world, they were both like children, but when the husband's health failed, the wife had stepped into the breach, taking up the work so far as she was able. She was now earning the means on which both subsisted. The Deacon had had his ambitions, having been an indefatigable student, and had aimed for the concert stage. His name was Henry Martin, and as no play on words seemed appropriate here, they had dubbed him "Deacon."

These desert storms filled him with a nameless dread. Whether it was that the dry air, rendered still drier by the wind, tended to make him nervous, or whether, the sky being overcast during these storms, the depressing effect was due to the

absence of the sun, he did not know, but their recurrence awoke in him intense anxiety of mind, like portents of disaster, as of calamities impending.

"Whitey and I were in town all day," said Stevenson. "We stayed at Nick's. He takes all the papers, and you can get a good dinner there, too."

"Nick's is the only place in town that has no gambling layout," reflected White.

"Deacon, have you ever been to see the game at the White Heifer?"

A negative from the Deacon.

"When you do go," said Fillmore, "take notice of the dealer at the roulette table. He's a lunger in the last stages of the disease, so emaciated that you can almost see the skull through his face. His fingers, as he rakes in the coins, look twice the length of an ordinary man's. It's uncanny."

"I don't suppose he does it from preference," said White. "Perhaps he's been bucking the tiger himself, and this is the only way open to him to make a living."

"He won't have to worry about a living much longer if he spends his days in that place. The air is so thick you can cut it with a knife. It's plain they don't cater to invalids or they'd ven-

tilate. Their patronage sure comes from cowboys and miners. He won't last a month there." This from the doctor.

"You come to town with me to-morrow, Deacon, and we'll see the game," said White, rising as he looked at his watch. "We can see all we want to in half an hour."

"Do you good to see a little of life," said a young fellow by the name of Salton. "The spice of danger is taken out of it, owing to this being almost a Yankee city, but it's interesting in a measure, and gives you something to write about to the fellows back home."

"You should see the letter I wrote to the fellows on the Tribunal about gambling experiences here," put in White, willing to defer his walk provided he might have the centre of the stage a while longer. "I drew word pictures of a scene purporting to have been witnessed by me, which, if they believed it,—and people will believe anything about the West,—must have made their hair stand on end. I described a fight over the cards with bowie-knives between a Chinaman and a 'bad man,' in which both were almost dismembered."

"That's it," said another. "It enables you to make your letters picturesque."

"In some of the mining towns in the interior,

I'll bet you can see bowie-knives and guns on the tables alongside the players yet," remarked White, as he turned to go, "but that's all right. It makes people polite. The revolver's a great civilizer."

"You haven't settled yet what it is that brings Branscombe out here," said Fillmore. "Before we adjourn I move that Whitey be appointed a committee of one to ascertain this momentous fact and make a report later."

his presence in the Camp seemed to justify him in interpreting it to the other's discredit, at least for the purposes of fiction.

White felt sure that Branscombe had a history —everything betokened it. The youngish face in conjunction with his gray-besprinkled hair seemed to proclaim the fact, and render him an interesting psychological study to the volatile White. Men like this, he reflected, are not out on the desert except for a purpose. Saint or sinner, hero or villain, he made a picturesque figure, and as such, seemed legitimate property for his purpose. He must have a history out of the common, he felt convinced. Since he could not get at the real one, he constructed one, sketching him at one time as a red-handed assassin weltering in gore; at another, as a very prince of Machiavellian craft.

Had Branscombe so desired, the two might have become the best of friends, in which case he would probably have been elevated to the post of hero. Since this was not to be, he must take the consequences. As this conception of the character of Branscombe grew in his hands, he became by insensible degrees the leader in the opposition against him, the others humoring his outbursts for the fun they afforded.

The Deacon was the antithesis of all this. He was a plain, straightforward young man, inclined

to take things literally, having the curious simplicity that often goes with the artistic temperament. He might have taken Emerson's words, "Be and not seem," for his motto to govern his life by. His mental processes were less involved, and he was not so decorative an adjunct of the Camp as was White, but he fitted into his niche, and as a component part of the whole, was perhaps quite as important as the other.

Nature had compensated him for his slight physical condition by giving him an ardent soul; or perhaps the soul was wearing out the body. In either case, in the sum-total,—if life is to be measured by what it yields,—he probably was faring as well as the dullard of perfect health living out his allotted three-score and ten.

After receiving their mail and making a few purchases, the Deacon, full of the letter he was going to write, was for returning to Camp at once, but White, determined that he should see the game, held him to his agreement.

Many of the gambling places in the Southwest never close their doors night or day. They are freely patronized by all classes, and large sums of money change hands there, but luxuriousness is not a characteristic of them as in the East. The footfall is not deadened by the deep pile of Turkish carpets; the walls are relieved by prints instead

of paintings and tapestries, and lunches are not in evidence. No bait is required to lure patronage here.

It was still early, but the games were in progress as they entered, with bystanders grouped about. A decorous silence prevailed, broken by the clicking of chips. No effort is made in these places to induce visitors to participate in the game, many of them never hazarding a dollar.

"We should have come in the evening to see the thing properly," complained White. "I don't count on getting you here again, and I wanted you to see something worth while. I never come here of an evening but what I see 'stuff' that would make at least half a column were I still on the staff."

"Why do you come?" asked the Deacon simply.

"Oh, it don't do me any harm. It's part of my business as a newspaper man to see what's going on. I do it to keep my hand in. I've never played in my life, and have no desire to. I come for the spectacle, and never remain longer than, say, a quarter of an hour; the air's too bad. It's a risk for a lunger to come here at all. But there's lots going on in these places out of which good 'copy' might be made. It's really a pity to see it go to waste."

A young fellow, rather shabbily clothed, with a nameless something about him that suggested homelessness—perhaps it was the wistfulness reflected in the innocent blue eyes that somehow seemed to convey the impression of habitually seeking something—came in and took a chair. He appeared to be a *habitué* of the place. The pinched features and hectic flush denoted the consumptive. He descried White from across the room and nodded to him. When he was out of ear-shot White gave the Deacon a bit of the other's history.

"He's only a simple country boy, not much over twenty. He came here for his health about four months ago, from Virginia, and has been up against it for fair ever since. I don't suppose he had ever seen a city before leaving his home, or had ever been in a saloon. His father has been dead some years. His mother died the past summer. They had a little farm which he carried on. He lost much rest taking care of his mother during her last illness. After her death, the attending physician, though not well versed in tuberculosis signs, suspected the presence of the disease, and, on making an examination, this was confirmed. It was quite incipient, and he advised him to go to Arizona where he could work on a ranch while being cured. To expect a simple,

guileless youth like this to make his way among strangers, and in sickness, is the height of absurdity; he would not have been equal to it had he been perfectly healthy, but that's a blunder that's constantly made.

"He had about fifty dollars on reaching here, and stayed around town while it lasted. It's singular how many reach here with just fifty dollars. That seems to be the limit with many. Then he got a job on a ranch for his board, but as the ranchman seemed to expect as much work from him as if he had been paying him wages, he left and came back to town. In a few days hunger drove him to the County house, but he only stayed there a few days, saying it was impossible to stand it. This was about six weeks ago. Since then he has been existing on a stray quarter or half-dollar here or there that others give him, with which he buys food. When no one gives him anything he fasts. He has no regular room but does little jobs about the place here, for which they allow him to sleep on the floor in an out-of-the-way corner, when he can do no better. Occasionally he has a chance, through the kindness of a clerk in one of the cheap lodging-houses, to occupy a bed, should there be one vacant when closing time comes. All the while he has been writing home for money, looking for it from day to day. He

has uncles and cousins there, but they do not believe that he is unable to work, and tell him he should work for his board until he can secure something better. They refuse to loan him money, saying the sisters, who are younger, should have the preference in this respect. The farm cannot be mortgaged during their minority. He's too proud to tell them just how he's living—they might cast him off altogether if he were to do so, and he lives along in this way, hoping from day to day that they will relent and send him enough to get home with. I give him a dollar occasionally, which is as much as I can afford—it may be a long while, if ever, before I'm able to earn any money—and others do a little for him too, so that he manages to keep on living, but that's about all. He looks as if his disease had progressed considerably during the past month. Worry eats into a lunger's life worse than the bugs."

"He looks so unused to this kind of thing. How did he get started in here?" asked the Deacon, pity in every inflection of his voice. "Did he play while he had money?"

"He doesn't know one card from another, and says he never staked a dollar in his life. But he'd been living in a cheap lodging-house, where everything is cheerless and unpleasant. He looks as if he had been fairly well brought up. You know

what a lonely, unhappy time a fellow has on first coming, until he gets settled. The saloons are always open, have the best locations, are bright and cheerful, and a welcome is generally extended to a presentable young fellow whether he spends anything or not. It's perfectly natural they should gravitate there when there's no other place for them."

"I'll put a half on twenty-eight," said a young fellow near the roulette table, suiting the action to the word.

"Here's a town of fifteen thousand people, with a church on every corner almost, with clubs and fraternal organizations, and all the machinery of a first-rate social life, but the thing most needful, one would think, in a town with such a large transient population, a Y. M. C. A., is lacking."

"That's so," assented the Deacon. "There's hardly a town in the East of five thousand or upwards, but has its Y. M. C. A."

"If there were such an institution here," went on White, "where a young fellow could meet others, where some one would take an interest in him, and advise him on occasion, where there was a reading-room and library, perhaps the saloons and gambling places wouldn't do such a big business."

"Quite likely," assented the Deacon again.

"Damn the luck! it's green again!" came from the young fellow who had put his half on twenty-eight.

"Whenever the ball drops on green, all the winnings, no matter how many are playing, go to the dealer," explained White. "Roulette is a square enough game, that is, it can't be manipulated. Once the ball leaves the dealer's hand, it spins around until it comes to a stop. It's just as liable to drop into a red or black compartment, as green. Green coming out twice this way is an unusual run of luck for the dealer. It's quite a deep game when you come to study it. Of course, there's no system ever been devised to beat it. If there had been, the game would have been changed to meet it. In the long run, the chances are in favor of the dealer, you bet! The average player knows this too.

"Just now," continued White, harking back to his former theme, "this element has its own way entirely here, but it won't last forever. There has already been a Y. M. C. A. here, as a matter of fact, but it never was in a flourishing condition. It lingered on for a while and then flickered out. The reading-rooms were small, wholly inadequate to the demand, and it came to be called the Lungers' Retreat, because most of the seats were monopolized by them. This 'knocked' it, and, as

is asserted by many, was the cause of its discontinuance. When they organize again they ought to have their own building, with a roof-garden on top, exclusively for lungers. A lady deeply interested in sociological work, an invalid like us, suggested this to me, and——"

"She didn't use the word 'lunger'?" interrupted the Deacon.

"Not in this instance. I think the idea an excellent one, and hope to see it adopted."

"I'll just copper that bet," came a voice from the faro table. "Two on the ace!"

"There could be a glass-enclosed room," went on White, "for windy days, and eggs and milk could be served at nominal prices from a booth. Here they could remain all day in the pure air, with magazines and newspapers, reclining chairs, and such other conveniences as might be required. I'll venture to say that many a life might be saved in this way."

"Seventeen on the red!"

"Such an organization could do much for the welfare and advancement of the city," went on White. "It is entirely within the province of such an institution to interest its young men in civic improvement and train them to good citizenship, and they couldn't do better than to begin with the lunger question. The ordinances in regard to

fumigating rooms and bedding occupied by consumptives, as well as to spitting about, are never properly enforced, and, as is well known, this is the way the disease is propagated. A Y. M. C. A. organization could appoint a committee of young men who would see to the enforcement of the laws in this respect as a matter of self-protection, and, if necessary, have the city appoint a salaried official for the purpose.

" Bellenden, the young Virginian I've been telling you of," continued White, coming back to his original subject, " drifted in here with others from the cheap lodging-house where he roomed, and he shouldn't be blamed, as there was no other place for him to go to."

" He might have gotten himself a tent and gone out onto the desert and 'bached' it as we are doing."

" Yes, if he could have lived on air subsequently. After a while, the scientists may be able to arrange things so that we can get our sustenance from the oxygen in the air, but at present we require groceries. It would have used up his fifty dollars and more, to get the tent and furniture, and get started. Besides, they don't know how to proceed in the matter, and they're afraid of loneliness in the country. An organized camp's the thing, but you can't get into one for less than

nine or ten dollars a week. The pathos of this disease is, that it mostly attacks young men like us, who haven't yet had a chance to get money ahead. If it came in middle age, we'd be better prepared to meet it."

"Why don't you get Bellenden's home address and write to his uncles?" asked the Deacon.

"I have, and received no answer. Then I wrote a Masonic friend in New York, who I knew had affiliations throughout that region. In due time I received a reply, answering my questions minutely, and confirming everything that Bellenden had said of himself. In the young fellow's opinion, the uncles—there are two of them—care very little whether he lives or dies. He has a small life insurance which they keep up, and will probably get hold of, as well as his land, when he dies."

A slender, well-dressed, gentlemanly appearing man entered, crossed the room, and spoke with an employee at the farther end. White called the Deacon's attention to him.

"He's one of the proprietors of the place, and is what might be called a victim of circumstances himself. He came here as a lunger, some years ago. You'll think I'm stringing you when I tell you he studied for the ministry, and, if his health hadn't broken down, would probably be in the

pulpit to-day. He had been trying to work his way through college but didn't have the physique to stand it. Tuberculosis developed, and he had to give it up before graduation.

"On coming here he could have had a situation in a store, but he wanted outside work. He had scarcely any money and had to take the first thing that presented itself, which was a job on a ranch. But the work was hard, he was not accustomed to it, and, after trying it a few months and finding that his health was not improving, he left and came back to town. Here he tried one thing after another until he finally joined issues with a prospector, a good mining man who had formerly kept a saloon but had lost it, and was going to try his luck again in the hills. After a year or so of struggle, they made a strike which netted them a few thousands, and returned to town and started this place. They've been here now three years and are doing a big business. He deals faro himself once in a while, but not generally, as the bad air and stale tobacco smoke ain't just the best thing in the world for him, and he's got sense enough to know it."

While White was still speaking his attention was drawn to a young man recently come in, whose actions made it evident that he was suffering great mental perturbation. He seemed un-

decided whether to remain and take a hand, or to leave. He was evidently afraid of himself. A glance at his features indicated to the practised eyes of the friends that he was an invalid like themselves. Although his clothing might have been a little the worse for wear, there was a certain elegance in his bearing and manner which attracted attention toward him.

The friends remarked on his attitude of indecision, how he occasionally walked to the door, then returned, looking at his watch frequently, and showing evidences of inward commotion. Finally, his scruples overcome, he sat down at a faro table and began to play. A tenseness in his attitude riveted their attention on him. An atmosphere of disquietude seemed to envelop him. They had a misgiving that all was not right. Something tragic seemed about being enacted.

White, experienced in these things, would have given a good deal to have been able to prevent him from playing, but that he knew to be impossible now that he had begun. He saw that he was playing cautiously, but he also saw that he was losing, and the expression of his face—the set despair, as he saw his little hoard dwindle—haunted him for many a day thereafter.

The young fellow at no time played wildly or for large stakes, but it was apparent that luck was

against him. When the end came, he rose from his seat and left the place. He looked so wild and haggard that White and the Deacon followed him out with the object of engaging him in conversation, to which he scarcely responded. They were, however, too well versed in the symptoms of their common disease to deem it safe to leave him, the excitement under which he was laboring making a collapse something to be apprehended.

Directing their steps to a small park on another street, they seated themselves and began talking on indifferent subjects.

"What do you think of Roosevelt's attitude on the Eastern question?" began White.

The young man looked at him with a dazed expression but had no opinion to offer.

"I was over at the Park last Sunday," continued White, taking another tack, "to see the steer-tying contest. They sure do their work up slick. One steer was tied in just twenty-nine seconds from the time the cowboy started his horse after him. They had some broncho-busting too. Some of these little bronchos are devils."

Still silence.

"The most fun is with the outlaws," persisted White, resolved to hammer away until he could incite some interest, or get some kind of an answer. "That's the name they give those horses

which will not allow themselves to be ridden. They can be saddled all right, and sometimes will allow of their being harnessed, and can then be made to work, but they won't stand for having anyone on their backs. Throw them every time."

"The Tonto dam is a great project. There's likely to be a big boom here when the government irrigation works are completed," adduced the Deacon in the laudable effort to do his part. But it likewise failed to elicit a response.

"I'm afraid all this irrigation is no good for us lungers," postulated White, beginning the attack again. "It makes it damp. What we need is a dry atmosphere. A good place for a lunger's camp would be up in Paradise Valley; but they would have to give it another name. Paradise wouldn't just be popular with lungers. It's too suggestive. They'd have to get water there somehow, too."

"There's plenty of water in the mountains above there." It was the Deacon's turn. "There would be no trouble in getting enough for domestic purposes anyway."

The situation was becoming strained. "Have you been long in Arizona?" asked White.

Thus directly appealed to, the young man had no other course but to answer, which he did briefly. "Since last autumn."

"Did you come alone?"

"Yes."

"So did I. 'Way from New York. It takes a good deal of sand for a lunger to go so far away from home."

"Nothing matters much anyway, I begin to think," said the stranger, closing his eyes wearily. Then his body swayed and he would have fallen had not White caught him.

But it was only a momentary weakness, and he was soon able to sit up without help.

"Look here, my friend," said White. "You're not well, and oughtn't to be around this way. Have you anyone to look after you at your home? You ought to go to bed right away. There's always danger of a hemorrhage in your condition."

"That wouldn't matter much either," was the reply. "Nothing makes much difference any more."

White hesitated. He was loth to pry into the affairs of the other, but had seen enough, earlier in the day, to convince him that he was in the presence of a trouble that might end in tragedy. Most of an invalid's difficulties, he reflected, are referable to a lack of money. He had little enough himself, but here was a case where it would be impossible to withhold such help as he could af-

ford. It was no time for delicacy; he plunged into the subject.

"What's the matter? Strapped? I noticed you at the game."

The other nodded.

"Suppose we take you home and get you to bed. We'll call again to-morrow and will help you out in some way."

It transpired that he had a room in a cheap boarding-house near by, and the friends took him there and helped him to bed. They then looked up the woman who managed the house, asking her to see to him occasionally, stating they would call again the following morning.

"All right," was the reply, delivered with a brisk, alert manner, "if you say you'll come to-morrow, I'll see to him meanwhile, but we've seen so much of that kind of people here in destitute circumstances, that we don't feel sorry for them any more. We've been blamed for letting sick people suffer, but there are so many destitute invalids here, that to relieve them would be taking the bread out of our own mouths. One gets hardened to it. I used to feel sorry for them," she added, observing the disapprobation in White's face, "but now I think they shouldn't have come."

After assuring her again that they would certainly call there in the morning, the friends took

their departure. But the freshness and charm that had so elated them earlier in the day seemed dissipated by the incident, and they drove back to Camp feeling depressed.

White, in his capacity of journalist, had often had occasion to write up cases in which all sorts of misconduct had proceeded from persons hitherto free from any charge of wrong-doing. Under the spell of the most mixed motives, they had been driven to their action, as it were, by a force temporarily beyond their control. He did not feel inclined to blame Hamer, which was the young man's name, for his weakness in this particular instance, so much as for his folly in coming to Arizona at all while the matter of funds for his subsistence was so uncertain. It was an equally great piece of folly, having come here, to remain in the city, where all the conditions, physical and mental, are, for the most part, unfavorable to the invalid. Had he gone right out to the desert, he would in all probability be in much better condition now from every point of view.

Willard Hamer, back in the old Connecticut village, even before his sickness had come on, had never had a very easy time. His father had died when the boy was twenty years of age, leaving no means except the house in which he had lived. The mother possessed but little initiative and it

devolved on Willard to take his father's place as head of the family. His mother instituted a few economies, but before the year was out the bills had accumulated to such an extent that they were compelled to borrow a few hundreds from a relation on a note. By the next year there was a mortgage instead of a note.

"Your only chance is to go to Arizona," said the doctor under whose charge he had placed himself. "Live in a tent if possible. I do not say this will cure you. That depends largely on yourself. Follow my directions and you will at least prolong your life. Keep on here the way you are going, and you won't live a year. Had you followed my advice and stopped working six months ago, your chances would be much better."

"Why not try a sanatorium here?"

"You are beyond the incipient stage. It would be hard for you now to gain admission into any but the high-priced private ones. These would be more expensive than to go West. And you would be separated from your people just the same. You might get something to do there after a while."

He was a little wizened man, this doctor, with preternaturally bright eyes. Hamer, well dressed, well favored, sat, revolving in his mind the advice about Arizona, hardly taking in its purport. This

was one of his fairly good days, and he tried to deceive himself into the belief that he was getting better. There was a school-boy attachment, for one thing, that made him cleave, with all his strength, to the old home and to his position.

And then his mother. How could he give up ambitions and duties for a life of inaction, of possible destitution thousands of miles away? He tried to persuade himself that he was feeling better. There was no temperature, the doctor said, adding that it was a good sign, and he argued from this that if he were careful, he might get well at home. During the past six months, knowing that he was attacked by the disease, he had collected considerable information on the subject, learning among other things, that the disease is easily curable if taken in time, often curing itself without the individual knowing of its presence. Might it not be so with him?

He lulled himself into security a little longer; then came a sudden turn for the worse, and he was compelled to give up his position.

The bait held out to him by his physician—that he might be able to get something to do after reaching the southwest, had made it easier for him to take the step. Could he but earn enough to pay his board, he argued, it would not be so bad.

Through the sale of some clawfoot mahogany

they had left, funds were obtained that enabled him to purchase a colonist's ticket for Arizona, and his employer gave him a present of fifty dollars. With the fallacious hope before him of earning some money while making the cure, he remained in the city on coming to his destination, taking quarters in a cheap boarding-house. His fifty dollars were still intact, but it represented nearly all his available means. The ready money that he possessed on giving up his position he had divided with his mother, and his portion had been used in necessary purchases and in traveling expenses en route.

The woman with whom he boarded spoke encouragingly to him about his probable recovery, which emboldened him to ask about the prospects of obtaining work after a while. He was told that, in a few months—when he was better—there would probably be no trouble about it. But when his money was gone, she advised him to go back home, as no sick man ought to work. He, however, tried, in a half-hearted way, to get work, and when that failed wrote home for money, saying that if he could get nothing to do he would have to return. The money came sooner than it was expected. His mother did not enlighten him as to how it was obtained, and he did not ask. When it was received, he began making prepara-

tions to leave for the East, but with every hour his unwillingness to go increased, and the woman, noticing this, told him that as he was improving, it would be a pity to go back, and undo all the benefit he had gained. It ended by his remaining.

"Had I come to Arizona at once, when the doctor told me of my condition," said Hamer in telling his story to the two friends when they called next morning, "I might now be able to do a little work, but I kept on working for nearly six months longer, as I could not bring myself to give up my position when there was no income from any other source. Finally I had to stop, as I became unable to do my work."

He was still in bed, and the friends urged him not to exert himself any more, saying they would call again the next morning. They had formulated a plan over night, whereby it was arranged to bring him out to the Camp as soon as he would be in condition to make the change. When they communicated this to him he was immediately interested, and insisted on going on with his story, averring that he felt pretty well.

"My mother has been keeping boarders since I have been here, and has managed to send me a pittance on which I have existed. The money I lost yesterday had been sent me over a week ago,

with the injunction that it be used to go home with. I didn't want to go home; there would have been but the one result had I done so. I balanced the matter and resolved to take a desperate chance; I would either double it or lose all. If I were compelled to go home it would have been all up with me any way, so I took the chance. I don't blame the man who runs the game. If I had won I would have taken the money. He told me not to play when I lost my weekly remittance once, saying that the chances were too great."

A violent fit of coughing interrupted the narrative and he was compelled to desist. When he was somewhat rested the friends rose to take their departure.

"I want to leave here," said Hamer wearily. "Come for me to-morrow. I'll be able to go all right to-morrow. I'm tired of the city. I'll be glad to get away from here."

When the visitors came down, they found the landlady waiting in the hall, evidently desirous of speaking with them. Before they had an opportunity of telling her their plan of taking the invalid to their Camp, she broached the subject of his removal.

"Your friend has been talking about going back East," said she, "and I think that would be

the best thing he could do. His mother wants him back, he tells me, and he would do much better there than here. Have him go before he spends all his money."

White for the moment was nonplussed. Then he decided that it would be better to acquaint her with the exact condition of affairs, which he did as briefly as possible, adding that they intended taking him to their Camp as soon as he could be moved.

"But if he hasn't any money, your taking him to your Camp won't do him any good, unless he can get more funds from his mother, and he is not by any means certain of this."

"What else is there to do?" rejoined White. "He cannot remain where he is, that is evident. We'll have to take care of him until some other arrangements can be made."

"Send him home. He isn't going to live much longer anyway, and he might better die at home with his people than here among strangers. A half-rate ticket can be procured through the board of supervisors if he's really destitute. I think I can manage that part of it, if his friends will make up the money to pay for it. Or, there's another way, on second thoughts. He can go back in charge of a corpse. The railroad companies require that a corpse be always accompanied; that

is, it takes two first-class tickets to transport it. Except for his sleeping-berth and meals, he can go back without cost in that way. I've had considerable experience in these matters. By the time he's well enough to travel, some one is almost sure to die and have to be sent home."

The woman spoke in a business-like, energetic manner, totally unconscious of there being anything anomalous or incongruous in her proposition.

The spectacle of a dying man awaiting such an opportunity, and then taking the three-thousand-mile journey under such conditions, rose up dramatically before White, and journalist that he was, he thought of the newspaper article that might be made of it.

"It oversteps the line of pathos," he said, when they were outside, the break in his voice disguised by the grin summoned to his features. "There is something grotesque, sardonic, almost ludicrous in such a proposition. That a sentient human being should be so the sport of circumstance! We'll have him out to the Camp anyway, and later, he can do as he likes about going home; but if he decides to go, he don't go with no corpse (it was the custom of the Camp to multiply negatives when desiring to add force to a statement), not if the Court knows herself. He'll go unincumbered if I have to pay his fare myself. I hope

he'll be able to come with us to-morrow. I'd like to get him away from there."

But when they came for him the next morning, he had already taken his long journey, the journey which each must take alone. Hamer had gone home.

CHAPTER III

FROM out a storm of bitterness and self-scorn, with his neck bowed to the yoke, Branscombe had come to the desert in much the same frame of mind as formerly the hunted criminal ran to sanctuary. His coming to the West seemed to him always after, like a flight to cover, not a course in which he had any choice. True, he had no pursuers,—he was escaping from himself only, but his plight seemed none the less desperate to him. He came in September, six weeks or more before the invalids began coming in any numbers, selecting a location a few miles from town and near a car line, where he pitched his tent, taking his meals at a ranch-house near by. This would do as a preliminary, he thought. Later, when he should have acquired some experience of the country, he would go well out into the desert. That was what he would like, he thought; to get far away, for a while at least, from the presence of any human being. He had seen enough of people to last him a long while. He would have to have an Indian or two to attend to his wants, to go

into town for supplies, etc., but they wouldn't count. In anticipation he already saw himself out there, his tents and ponies making an imposing outfit, the trunkful of books unpacked, his drawing materials and paints at hand.

Meanwhile, he spent many hours each day in the saddle. Purposely cutting himself off from humankind in his resentment, the need of the human for sympathy, for comradery, for cooperation yet remained, and the pony became his resource. He found all of these attributes to a limited extent in his broncho, and a good understanding soon became established between horse and rider.

Usually, he had no particular goal, leaving the decision as to the course with the pony, which, grown weary of civilization even as had his master, and as if atavistically recalling scenes of former wildness, always took to the desert, on being given a free rein.

The lure of the mountains—how irresistibly they invite, with what force they attract in these desert lands! Their colorings, ever changing according to the hour, the distance, or the atmospheric conditions—now sapphire, now deepest purple verging into black, again amethystine, and at sunset flame-encircled in myriads of tones—were a phenomenon of which he never tired.

Sometimes he would take his Indian boy, Loyola, along, whose stolidity was such that he was scarcely more of a restraint to him than the broncho. On these occasions he would extend his trips a day's journey or more into the mountains, where he would camp for the night, returning by a different route. Only the barest necessities were taken on these mountain trips; sleeping-bags, canteens for water, bacon, hardtack, and coffee.

As with all quiet people to whom conversation does not come easily or spontaneously, he had a good flow of thought, and found it no hardship to be alone. His thoughts, when not too disciplinary, served to beguile him. In the profound silence of these wastes, seemingly as yet untrodden by the foot of man, Fancy could unobstructedly weave her pictures for his delectation, and he felt less alone there, than sometimes when in a crowd.

The reserve in which he wrapped himself, the solitude in which he lived, were helpful in giving him opportunity for reflection and assimilation. He was glad to be here, away from the rattle and bang of the city, where he might settle old scores with himself and think out a new plan of life.

He had hitherto failed to realize any of the ideals with which he had plentifully supplied himself on starting out in life. He had long been pursuing a downward course, drifting with the

current, and discontent and foreboding had grown apace with the passing years. In the pursuit of Pleasure, which had chiefly been a pursuit rather than an attainment, the jade ever flying from before him, pursue he her never so ardently—these ideals had been allowed to slip through his fingers, and he now realized, like an unsuccessful gambler, that he had been a loser on all counts, staking what he knew to be best for a doubtful gain and losing both.

Branscombe never quite gave up his faith in himself, and this is perhaps the best feature of this ofttime pitiful human nature of ours, that no matter how often we fall, we are always ready to rise and make another attempt.

This *blasé* man of the world, just turned thirty-six, whose black hair was already streaked with gray, who had tired of everything, been everywhere, exhausted everything, had come to the Southwest almost as a last resource.

To such a pass had he been brought in the old life that he had contemplated suicide as an escape from the thrall of things, but his curiously vacillating disposition had saved him from this crowning folly. "The dice of God are always loaded," said Emerson. To have lived to such poor purpose that at thirty-six oblivion came to be the best that was desired—here was food for reflection.

Surely the fault must be in himself, he reflected with a humility born of his introspection.

He had been his own master since coming of age, his parents having died some years previous to that event. He was their only child. His father had been a physician of some prominence, and would have preferred that the son follow in his footsteps, but did not even suggest this to him, not wishing to bias him in any way. The father died during the young man's first year at Harvard, and the mother, always rather delicate, followed him a year later.

This left him quite untrammeled so far as any real authority over him went. True, there was a guardian who had been appointed at the same time as the administrator, as he was still a minor, and who sought to counsel him; but, as guardian and ward were two hundred miles apart, and the divergence of their views of life was still greater, this did not count for much.

From the first, the guardian, who was an attorney, assumed as a matter of course that he would begin the study of medicine as soon as the academic course was finished. He frequently referred to it in his letters as if it were a settled fact, and did not concern himself much in the matter.

But the junior year had been a hard one for the

young man, owing in part to the attraction which the city began to exert over him, and the consequent loss of time from his studies. So hard had it been that he had been barely able to pull through and he began to tire of the whole thing.

"You assume in your letters," he wrote his guardian when he had determined on his course, "that it is all settled about my taking up the study of medicine. I think it only right to tell you that I have no such intention. There is no reason in the world why I should be a physician except that my father was one, and I think that an insufficient one. It seems to me that all my labor in acquiring an academic education would in large part be nullified thereby. Of what use culture when you don't have the leisure to enjoy it? My father's case is an example to me. He worked all the time, seldom being able to read anything outside the medical journals. And no one will contend that the medical profession in itself conduces to culture. Rather the reverse, I should say. There is not much that is elevating in studying about sores and the many other disgusting physical ailments that beset humanity. In my estimation, it's bad art, that last act of Camille. It would be sufficient simply to allude to the fact that she was dying of consumption, and not portray anything so unpleasant before an audience out for pleasure. It would

depress me, too, always to be in close contact with morbid, unhealthy people. Their egotism is another thing that I could never adapt myself to. Invalids seem to think that by virtue of their disease, everyone should defer to them, that they and their ailments are the most important matters in the universe.

"Then these people with imaginary ailments to whom you have to give a placebo and sympathize with—these were the greatest trial my father had to contend with. I must say I don't see how a physician can have any patience with them! They'd get the facts of the case from me if by doing so I made enemies of them for life!

"My father used to say, too, that he disliked taking people's money; that it was bad enough for them to be sick without bleeding them in addition. The physician, I take it, more than any other, should be an altruist, and I am not cut out for the part.

"But my strongest objection to medicine as a profession is its instability. In medicine nothing is ever settled. Much of what my father studied so painstakingly in his student days, and in which there was such difficulty in passing the examinations, had all to be unlearned again by a still slower process and something new substituted for it, which in turn has long ago been superseded by

other discoveries. There isn't much encouragement in studying, with the probability ahead of you that a good percentage of what you are acquiring will eventually prove to be wrong. It would make me still more vacillating and undecided than I naturally am.

" I grant you that the work of alleviating suffering, in the hands of capable conscientious men, to whom the work itself is of more moment than the money reward, is noble and honorable to a degree that no other work is. I frankly confess that I am not disinterested enough for this.

" My mother hoped I would choose a business career. She always maintained that the most respectable class in this country is the merchant class, to which her father belonged—that it is more dignified to hold the reins and control things than to be at everyone's beck and call as is the case with professional people. A business career like that of Grandfather Larrimore would indeed be less distasteful to me than any other, provided it were necessary for me to earn my living. But I shall not have to earn money. From what you have told me, as well as my mother, I know that my future would be secure if I never earned a dollar. As I will be able to afford it, there is no real reason why should I not follow my bent. And Art is really the one thing to which I am drawn. Art

endures. Culture, it seems to me, is the thing best worth living for. Since my father got no benefit from his life of drudgery, it seems to me I am the more entitled to it. My plan (and I hope you will concur in it) is to go abroad immediately after Commencement."

This letter brought the guardian to Cambridge within a few days after receiving it. "A most amazing young man," was his thought on reading it the second time. "I must see him at once and prevent him giving up his college course in any event. In these matters quick action is necessary, before the idea becomes fixed in the mind. I must get him to continue at college for this last year under any circumstances. By that time his better judgment will prevail."

When the young man presented himself at the hotel where his guardian was stopping, in response to a telephone call, the latter, feeling that he had the right on his side, looked forward to an easy victory. The young fellow looked so clean and wholesome, so well-bred and intelligent, that he would be sure to see the subject in the right light, when he should be through with him. But when the young man warmed up to his subject, the elder began to have his doubts.

"My father used to say," said Branscombe, rebutting a statement of the guardian that medi-

cine must be the most interesting profession going —" my father used to say that if there's a fool side to people they seem willing and anxious to exhibit it to the physician, no matter how carefully they conceal it from all the rest of the world; and then he quoted from Voltaire: '*Les hommes sont partout également fous.*'"

"Yet your father wanted you to take up the study of it as soon as you had graduated. He spoke to me on the subject once, some years ago."

"He never said anything to me about it, and my mother was opposed to it, as I said in my letter. Father used to tell my mother that people were such fools where the doctor was concerned, that only a man of unusual probity could resist taking advantage of them, and I quite agree with him in this finding. You will hear the most intelligent people say, 'My doctor orders me to do so and so,' or, 'Dr. Blank says I must!' etc., etc., just as if they had no volition in the matter. The incredible part is that while the physician is quite as fallible as the average mortal, people always take him seriously, obeying his orders for the most part unquestioningly, often against their better judgment, and sometimes continue when they know it to be to their injury. My father said once that he had people come to his office who, if directed by him to go out on the street at a certain

hour every day and stand on their heads, would try to carry out the order. And then he mimicked one in a high-pitched voice: 'Doctor says I must go out every morning and stand on my head. I don't know why; I don't see what good that will do, but he tells me to, and I suppose I'll have to.'

"Father wound up that time by saying that he had lost respect for the entire human race through being in the medical profession."

"Your father was inclined to be cynical, I think, in his later years."

"It's enough to make any one cynical, to be always looking for a little common sense in the people you meet and never finding it. At first, it seemed a huge joke to him to have people take him so seriously, hanging on his words as if they were inspired. Then he used to experiment with them, trying to tax their credulity, but everything went."

"The introspective, analytical mind, such as your father possessed, is more apt at discovering defects than good qualities. He probably would have found as much to criticise in any other vocation that he might have chosen."

"He told a woman once that there was great benefit to be had from bread pills properly made and judiciously administered, and actually got her to make them herself. After giving her minute

directions as to the mode of preparing them, in the making of which he said she must use only perfectly fresh baker's bread, he prescribed a regimen for her to the effect that she must go without breakfast, abandon coffee entirely, and take one of her bread pills a quarter of an hour after meals. The joke of it was, she actually improved under the treatment, and went about telling people what a good doctor he was. The lawyer isn't spoiled in this way, I know."

"The attorney advises and counsels, but acts on his own initiative in many cases. If his ability to handle the case is questioned, he retires from the case much as does a physician."

"But he doesn't order! he advises and counsels, and only when his advice coincides with the better judgment of his client is it followed. And the lawyer doesn't usually make any important move without the knowledge and consent of the client. A good litigant, the kind that wins out, generally knows at least as much about his case as does the lawyer. Sometimes he knows more. If people used the common sense in their relations with physicians as with their lawyers—in other words, if they would study up their case so as to be able to cooperate intelligently rather than to follow blindly, it would result in many more cases being found amenable to treatment.

"And the lawyer really would be more justified in giving orders than advice, as he is on surer ground. There is something stable about the law. The lawyer knows just what results a certain move will produce. My mother had many talks with me on the subject during the year she lived here after my father's death, and she confirmed my own preconceived ideas in the matter."

"Well, would you be willing to compromise on the law? By the way you argue your case perhaps this would be the best course," said the guardian, his eyes twinkling. "However, don't decide hastily. Finish your course, and, if you like, you might, after graduating, go abroad for a year before beginning the serious work of life."

"I don't need to compromise," was the reply. "I shall soon be my own master, and intend to live my own life. I must do the best possible with it. Don't mistake me; that which seems right for one will not do at all for another. Each individual is unique of his kind. I am glad to be different. I am an individualist to the core. If I've learned nothing else here, I have this, and I've learned it principally from those in my class who incline the other way. Many of the men here are taken up with sociology and talk big about being collectivists, and the duty of the individual to the whole. I wish to accentuate my individuality rather than

merge it. Admirable as it may be to devote yourself to the common cause, to take the part of the under dog, it's not my vocation; it involves a degree of self-abnegation that is altogether foreign to me. I'd rather play the part of Nietzsche's Superman, developing, augmenting at the cost of others if need be; I have no desire to sacrifice myself for the good of the race. My aim is to improve this ego that I call myself—to bring it up to its highest state of efficiency—to make the most out of it that is possible."

"You cannot do that better than by remaining right here until you graduate. A year longer will do it, with hard work. Don't disappoint the expectations of your friends. Graduate first; then, if you are still of the same opinion, I will make no more opposition."

But this did not meet the young man's views, and, as he lacked only a few months of his majority, attaining it before the fall term began, he took the matter into his own hands. In conjunction with the administrator, he adjusted his affairs during the summer, making preparations for a long absence, after which, he proceeded direct to Paris.

CHAPTER IV

BRANSCOMBE remained abroad nearly ten years, spending most of his time in Paris, ostensibly in the study of art. He established himself in luxurious bachelor quarters, leading a more or less Sybaritic existence, dabbling in music and literature, achieving nothing in any direction. Selfishness, listlessness, waste of opportunity, absolute uselessness—the so-called small sins, which taken *en masse,* are more soul-corroding than crime—these had been the things by which he had been led, and which had well-nigh wrought his ruin.

The awakening had come through a crisis, an upheaval, from which he at last had come to a realization of himself. A boat accident in which his companion had lost her life, and in which his own had been jeopardized, had brought him up by a sharp turn.

It was while with a yachting party on Long Island Sound that the tragedy had occurred, which, for the time being at least, had changed the current of his life. And it had been brought about by what at first had seemed a very simple, unimportant

circumstance. Looking aft, in the midst of the champagne drinking, Branscombe had caught sight of the dinghy trailing at the stern, and asked the lady sitting next to him to occupy it with him for a while. There was no sailing-master aboard, the owner feeling himself competent to handle the little craft, and as no objection was offered to the project, the transfer to the small boat was made, though not without some difficulty, as already the wind was fresh.

As it increased in violence, some of the party were for taking in a reef, but the skipper, with the elation due to the champagne, as well as the swift motion of the boat through the water, would not consider this, and the yacht sped along at a spanking rate. The momentum soon became such, that the small boat, trailing behind, was thrashed from side to side with such force that the occupants were unable to retain their seats. Buffeted about, their bodies bruised and sore, they were in momentary peril of being thrown overboard, the party on the yacht meanwhile being totally unconscious of their plight. Branscombe's companion frantically appealed to him for help, but when he signified, mostly by motion, that the only thing he could do was to attempt to climb along the hawser and so reach the yacht, she clung to him in an agony of terror at the thought of

being left alone. He shouted himself hoarse, but the wind and the swashing of the water against the hull, prevented his cries from being heard by the party, evidently too much engrossed in their own affairs to consider the others much.

Finally, a heavy lurch in an unguarded moment threw his companion so that her head struck the gunwale, and she was rendered unconscious.

His own condition was precarious; his body seemed bruised all over from the buffeting it was undergoing — his eyeballs seemed on fire — his throat constricted. It was impossible for him to do anything for his companion beyond preventing her from being washed overboard. It was characteristic of the man that, while formerly he had cared nothing for his life, and had often justified suicide, now that death was imminent, he found himself most unwilling to meet it.

How he longed for succor, not alone on his companion's account, but, be it said, on his own too! After all, life was sweet, something so precious that only a fool would throw it away. Could he but reach the yacht! He would give everything that he possessed to be once more safe. He began to despair of attracting the attention of his party. He remembered their parting injunction, to ring if he wanted any more champagne; it seemed ages to him since he had heard

this badinage. In the imminence of the danger he realized that he was as far from help practically, as if he had been cast adrift. He began considering whether it would not be advisable to cut the hawser, and so at least relieve the tugging, which every moment threatened to pitch them overboard. But he realized that he would soon be left behind by the yacht at the rate she was scudding ahead, and that she might get miles away before they would be missed. It was near nightfall; once separated from the yacht, all help from that quarter would have to be abandoned.

Could he row to shore in his almost disabled condition? They were some miles from land, and the sea was running high; he might be swamped; he might be run into by one of the big steamers; the new peril might be worse than the present one. He decided to remain where he was, clinging to the possibility that the others might come to his relief at any moment.

Finally, it occurred to him to attempt throwing something into the yacht to attract the attention of the others. He took off his shoes, and threw them, one at a time, aiming for the deck near the cockpit, but his arm was bruised and sore, and the small boat lurched to such an extent that they fell wide of the mark. A silver dollar was then tried but with no better result. His match-box also

went by the board and he was in despair for a while. Then, goaded to desperation he removed the shoes from the feet of his companion, and, taking a wet newspaper that lay in the bottom of the dinghy, he fastened it between them with his braces, making a kind of ball with it. With this he was more successful, landing it in the cockpit. In the effort of throwing it, however, he had risen in order to get a surer aim, and, a heavy sea striking the dinghy, she careened almost to the point of capsizing. She soon righted, but when he was able to look about him he found himself alone in the boat; his companion had been washed overboard.

Meanwhile, the skipper had begun hauling in the mainsail in order to come to their relief, when Branscombe succeeded in acquainting the others with the catastrophe, upon which the yacht was immediately put about in search for the body. But it was growing dusk and there was a sea running; they cruised about for an hour or more without avail, and were finally compelled to give up the search and return, seeing the hopelessness of continuing it longer.

When they made port Branscombe reported the matter to the authorities, and was held to await the finding of the coroner's jury.

It was midsummer and no murder had occurred

within the vicinity of New York for a month past. There had been a dearth of other news, and the papers took up the matter with avidity, demanding a rigid inquiry. When the body floated in to shore a few days thereafter, another sensation was produced by the fact that the lady's shoes were missing, which was commented on with headlines half a foot in length by some of the papers. It was openly charged that murder had probably been committed, the absence of the shoes being supposed to furnish evidence in this direction.

At the inquest, to which each of the party had been subpœnaed, it was brought out that they had been indulging freely in champagne at the time of the occurrence. The owner of the yacht was censured for this, and also for having no competent person in command. Had there been a sailing-master aboard, such use of the small boat, the newspapers pointed out, would not have been permitted.

It was Branscombe, however, who had to stand the brunt of the examination, and the press continued to score him as being the principal actor in the tragedy, demanding that the Grand Jury look into the matter. It was pointed out by the more conservative of the journals, which had refrained from the murder charge, that, as the cross-seats of the dinghy were fastened down, comparative

safety might have been obtained for the lady had she been directed to brace herself under one of them. Branscombe was called sharply to account for this oversight, as well as for not having at once, on noticing the danger, cut the hawser before he became disabled, in which event he would have been able to row to shore in case he had not been observed by the party on the larger boat.

Short biographies of his family appeared, with illustrations. A photo-engraving of his grandfather Larrimore, in old-fashioned stock and standing collar, taken from a painting in one of the libraries, appeared in a Sunday paper, together with a reproduction of the Larrimore warehouses, from whence the family fortune had come. And many a sermonette was preached; many a warning read off and eagerly absorbed by the public anent this prodigal son, this gilded youth, this gray-haired roue, by all of which titles he was alluded to.

They gave too, an illustration of Branscombe Manor in Northumberland, to the present occupant of which his father had been cousin. They went into minute details of the life there, what they had for breakfast, the house-parties they gave, how my lady, although upward of seventy, was a most indefatigable society woman, with a

picture of her in ball costume—how they employed twenty servants, and much other information calculated to throw light on the mystery.

His past life was put under the searchlight and whatever of discreditable action that could be brought forward was unearthed and given publicity. They facetiously discussed, in cold type, his relations with Miss Pinkie Bellmore, a former vaudeville favorite, popular in the Tenderloin district, to whom, they said, he had reached out a helping hand, enabling her to graduate from so questionable a mode of life into an establishment exclusively her own in an uptown apartment house, where she was known as Mrs. Adelaide Atkinson—at least that was the name under the bell-button—where she lived in the strictest retirement, denying herself to all callers except her patron.

Unsavory stories of other members of the party were also adduced in the effort to throw light on the matter.

Notoriety of a certain kind, the kind that was not inconsistent with respectability, they were not averse to; quite the contrary! rather was it to be courted, in a world so large and with the average individual so insignificant. But notoriety that has to do with police inquiry—that was quite a different matter. They felt virtuously indignant

that they should be subjected to this, and blamed Branscombe for it, holding themselves aloof, criticizing him severely for having proposed the use of the small boat from which all the trouble had sprung.

They blamed him too for his lack of resource in not being able to extricate himself, after plunging into the difficulty. It was like him; he never had any *savoir faire,* any initiative, they told one another. What a fiasco he had made of his detective part that time in the farce, when all that was required of him was to go on the stage with a tray as a waiter and look stupid while gathering evidence for the divorce. Not even to have sense enough for that! True, he had been urged to it against his will and without any preparation, Winslow, who was to have assumed the part, having missed a train, and wired that he could not make it, and that they must put some one else in his place—but why should he undertake it if he couldn't come out of it all right? A man ought to be equal to his emergency. And now he had compromised them all. They were not greatly given to Biblical quotations, Branscombe's friends, but one of them, Bainbridge, repeating a motto from Proverbs on his calendar, the gist of which was that a man might better meet a bear robbed of her whelps rather than a fool in his folly, said

that he now indorsed everything that Solomon had ever said about fools, and that they were more to be shunned than the proverbially unlucky man.

In their resentment they influenced others against him, so that he found himself almost alone in his trouble. Almost. There was one exception. One had remained true, sending him each morning during his detention in the Tombs and for a week after his release a bunch of violets, the donor remaining anonymous. At first he speculated long as to the author of the little gifts, the violets reminding him of his Paris days, but could come to no conclusion in the matter.

He knew his friends well enough to be able to imagine pretty nearly the sort of talk that was being circulated about him—the sneers, the whispered inuendoes, in which charges ranging from cowardice to murder were going the rounds; he had helped in this kind of thing himself with others as the butt—it was all quite familiar. And now it had come home to him. It had come to this, that he had brought the good old family names into disrepute. His sins at last had found him out. Like the fox of which Kant writes, that is to be punished not for any particular act of thieving, but rather for being the kind of animal that prefers to make its living by thieving, so was it with him; he had chosen this kind of life, of

which such visitations as he was now undergoing were only to be predicated, and though innocent in this particular instance, he recognized that he was being punished on general principles.

A curious humility took possession of him. It was as if, in the conduct of his friends toward him in his trouble, he for the first time recognized his own conduct and the character that had inspired it—this thoroughly selfish character, albeit his own, which had been revealed to him; this character, which in his self-scorn it seemed to him had scarcely a redeeming trait.

Spiritual stresses held him in thrall. Among all the medley of emotions caused by the revelation, shame and surprise came to the fore. That he should have so deteriorated, so have degenerated from the good old stock from which he had sprung! He was like one under conviction of sin. He stood before his conscience shorn of all guise —shamed—humiliated.

The patterns which come out on the web of our lives are after all of our own weaving. We become what we aim to become; we are that which we have striven to be, whether for good or for ill. If the results do not please us, we have only ourselves to blame. His life all along had been inextricably mixed up in the folly and selfishness of others. Those ideals which he had been so sure

of realizing might have been pursued to a successful culmination had he possessed the independence to think and act for himself. There was the trouble! He had always been willing to be led, he reflected, like a dog on a chain; he had never had the courage of his convictions—had never been able to summon the initiative by which he might have gone his own way, rather than that of others. True, he had asserted himself well enough in his contest with his guardian on the question of his career, but that was to enable him the better to have his fling; even in this he had deceived himself, as well as the other.

At the medical examination that he underwent, his own bodily condition furnished ample proof of the truth of his statement as to the buffeting he had received in the small boat. He would come out of the difficulty all right so far as the Coroner's jury went; he felt no apprehension on that score, but he realized all the same that a turning-point had been reached; it was as if a voice had said to him, "Thus far and no farther." His house of cards had tumbled about him; he must build anew; he would endeavor to build better, he resolved.

There was cause for disquietude in another direction also, which had had its effect in sending him to the West. He had been living beyond his

means, always intending to go into business "some time." The fliers he had taken in Wall Street had generally turned out to be sinkers. Other deals in the way of investments had panned out poorly. It would not do to encroach further on his capital, the only security against the future for such as he. As it was, the income would not suffice for his needs, for his many artificial wants, if he remained in the city.

But why remain in the city? What did it have to offer him of which he had not already a satiety? It seemed to him as if he had exhausted all the possibilities of sensuous enjoyment. In some obscure recess of his mind a voice raised itself, faint at first, but becoming more insistant as the days wore on, asking for work instead of voluptuous ease, for duty to replace the happiness he had so long vainly sought.

The free life of the far West began to attract him. He had once met some Arizona cattlemen in New York—Rough Riders returning from the Cuban war, and had become well acquainted with two in particular in the few days of their tarrying in the city en route to the West. The people had vied with each other in showing them attentions, and he had fallen into line with the rest. He had been impressed at the time by their bearing, their perfect health, their evident content-

ment. How well they carried themselves in this novel environment! With his life-long habit of introspection, he had often since drawn comparisons between his own life and theirs. Plainly, their lives were being lived to much better purpose than was his. He thought of the kind of life that could be lived there—the saneness of it, the healthfulness of it, and decided to go and try it.

He made no plans beyond the immediate present on arriving in Arizona; he would wait and see what the future had in store for him. The transition going on within himself—might he not hope that it would lead to better things? This man of wrong courses but right instincts had indeed often hoped for this, but his environment hitherto had held him in thrall as to an evil destiny. Now that he had separated himself from it, in this new perspective in which self-deception was no longer possible or to be tolerated, now that he could see his limitations, and know himself as he was—might there not yet be a chance for him to do something with his life?

A passionate longing to become regenerate, to live in such a way that life would have a meaning for him as it so evidently had for others, took possession of him at times. He had read somewhere of a character in a novel in whom, while trying to reconcile bad actions with good inten-

tions, an inward drama and argument continually went on. With him there was the inward drama, though not the argument; he could not but acquiesce in the summary of the mentor ever at his side, pointing out to him wherein he had erred; he made no plea, the censure and the upbraiding seeming to be part of the discipline he had to undergo. At least it was life—this awakening that had come to him; and to be thoroughly alive—even if it were to suffer—this was better than the old listlessness. For though the road was rough and toilsome, it might in time be overcome; he acquiesced in it all, hoping that a way of salvation might yet be adduced thereby.

In his long rides, when sometimes for the entire day he did not exchange a word even with his servant, his thoughts often dwelt on these things, but without any very great faith in their realization. He hoped however for higher standards, for a life of simplicity and reality. He at least desired something better, and that seemed some gain.

Humility grew within him with his acquisition of self-knowledge. How much better the character of these people about him, the one they called the Deacon, for instance, who was one of the first on the ground, and whose fine, open countenance had attracted his attention—how much better than his own. The picture that he saw of him-

self, compared with this, brought on the self-scorn anew when he contemplated it. This was his mental attitude while taking his first steps in the difficult path of self-conquest, and by it influx of light came to him.

The desert is the place for reflection, as is the outer world for action. In these vast distances—these deep silences—in the infinite harmony of Nature—here, if anywhere, may the spirit of man come to its own.

CHAPTER V

AS time wore on, Branscombe's grievances began to abate. He was too young and too healthy in mind and body to play the part of misanthrope for long, and his project of going well out onto the desert, attractive as it appeared at first, became less so as the time approached for putting it into execution. By degrees he came to interest himself to some extent in those nearest him, and, as he came to know something about them, learning their history from the ranchman at whose house he took his meals, he perceived to his surprise that they appeared content in all the privation in which their lot was cast. How could it be, he asked himself, that there could be even the semblance of happiness among them, under the limitations and privations which were theirs? The camp work, especially the heavier part of it, such as chopping wood and carrying water, was a hardship he could see, to men in their condition, yet it was generally done cheerfully. Although advised by their physicians to take at least six eggs a day, and more if they were able to digest

them, most of them, he was told, cut down the number to two or three when the price was high. With eggs at fifteen cents the dozen, they were able to digest a much larger quantity than when the price was thirty-five or forty. Clearly his own troubles, when contrasted by the real difficulties of these people, seemed imaginary, or far away.

This thing called life—what store they set by it! How they valued it! What a price they were willing to pay for it! These instances of women (of course young women, the disease doesn't attack people after middle age usually) camping alone on the roadsides, sometimes far from a house—when this fact was first brought home to him, during his rides about the country, he was incredulous, and was not convinced until the statement of his Indian boy was confirmed by the ranchman.

"But aren't they ever molested?" he asked. "With so large an alien population, Indians and Mexicans, and living just in tents, what security have they?"

"I have never heard of one being molested," was the response. "It's the custom of the country to sleep out of doors, away from the house, under the stars for about nine months in the year. There isn't a ranch-house in the country that is used for sleeping in by any of the family in summer.

People sleep soundly here, and many never lock their doors. We couldn't do this if we had a bad population, do you think?"

"No indeed," assented Branscombe.

"Let me tell you a little incident about a cowboy that occurred to me," said his wife. "It was in the early days—as much as fifteen years ago. In those days the cowboys still enjoyed the privilege of shooting up the town occasionally. We were living on the edge of town then, and I had been out buying something at a store. As I was crossing the main business street, a cowboy sailed around the corner like the wind, shooting as he came. I was so frightened that I fell into the dust. The first one to come to my help was this cowboy, and, although I was not hurt and walked to my home, he rode alongside to satisfy himself that I would get there all right. When I got to the door, I thanked him, and asked him his name. When he gave it, he took off his hat with a flourish, and then galloped away. That night there was a package left at our door, which I found in the morning. It was a dress pattern the color of the dress I had worn the day before. That dress had been soiled by my fall, and the other must have been left by the cowboy to replace it."

"I'm well acquainted with a former warden of the penitentiary at Yuma," continued the ranch-

man. "He says there are very few in there for anything bad. You wouldn't believe it, but not one in fifty is in for anything like stealing; it's mostly just shooting scrapes. The Arizonian may be a little too ready with his gun at times, but there's no harm in him."

How admirably the invalids about him adapted themselves to the changed conditions under which they now had to live! What could they find to laugh about? he sometimes thought. Why should Fillmore whistle? What did any of them have to whistle about? Their careers cut short, sick, often scant of money, being compelled to economize in ways which retarded recovery—surely here was little enough to make merry over. They were now merely spectators, lookers-on at the game of life instead of the active participants they formerly had been, and he could not understand how they could take it so easily.

There were the Latimer brothers, the latest accessions to the Camp. The younger, Percy, had been in the Territory a year, boarding at a ranch where he had been paying ten dollars a week. He had practically no means of his own, and had been maintained by his brother, a few years the senior. The brother now had been attacked by the same disease, and had been compelled to throw up his position and become a health-seeker himself. He

had been drawing a liberal salary, and this was to be continued a year, he told the ranchman, by which time he hoped to have his health restored sufficiently to enable him to do some light work. They were from San Francisco, and from a good family, as their appearance denoted.

And the Lockwoods. In this instance, it was the wife who was the invalid, the husband with a devotion that Branscombe could not have conceived of in himself having resigned his position as mill superintendent with three thousand hands under him—a position he had been working up to for fifteen years—in order to accompany his wife to the desert country. Here he ministered to her with a faithfulness that was the subject of remark throughout the Camp, content if he could but ease the situation for her.

Then there was Alford, whose chances for recovery were very slim. It was plain to even a casual observer, that he was failing. He had to walk with a cane now, and his coughing spells were growing more frequent, yet he, even, seemed cheerful between the paroxysms. In the silence of the night a groan might escape him after one of the coughing spells—Branscombe often read until midnight, especially after an all-day's ride, and Alford's tent was near his—but when any one was by he always put a good face on the matter,

even joking over the fact, Branscombe had overheard it, that his high temperature enabled him to get along with but one pair of blankets. "And that's where I have the bulge on you fellows," he had said.

And Wells and Farrell, sometimes alluded to as the "Wells-Fargo outfit." True, they were not in financial straits as were most of the others. There was a Japanese cook in charge of the Wells-Farrell menage, and there was probably money enough to enable them to live in comfort until recovery or death. Wells, so the ranchman told him, had been a mining engineer, "holding down" a fine position in one of the big copper-mines in Arizona. He and Farrell had been classmates in college and chums from the start. A Damon and Pythias friendship had developed between them, and when Farrell was stricken with the disease back East, it seemed obviously the wisest course for him to pursue to come to Arizona, and join his friend, also in delicate health, who had gone there on this account.

The Williams too, who had shown a friendly side to him, now that he came to think of it. They had been married eight years, and had a child, a little girl of five, who had been left behind with its grandparents. During health, Mr. Williams's salary had but just sufficed for their needs, and

now it had stopped. Fortunately he had a sick benefit fund from a fraternal organization, and this was supplemented by some money which had come to Mrs. Williams from a grandparent. They had sufficient means for the present, and when Mr. Williams's health should be sufficiently restored, they intended buying a small place near Pasadena where they might raise poultry and small fruits; but it was plain that their present outlook was something wholly different than what it had formerly been.

And how they all tried to celebrate the Christmas holidays! What faith in their own resources it betokened! Sitting in his tent on Christmas eve, cutting the pages of a magazine, he heard the tinkle of a guitar proceeding from one of the larger tents, and rightly concluded that those who were well enough, were gathered there, making an effort, at least a bid, for some of the cheer that went with the good old holiday.

The intermittent tinkling of the guitar set him to musing, causing him to drop his magazine.

The persistency of the Christmas spirit! How it seemed to permeate each and all as the season came round again. He recalled the Christmas holidays of his youth and early manhood—how he always came home from boarding-school or college to celebrate them with his mother, how he

disturbed the serenity and quiet of the house with his autocratic ways, how every one deferred to him, making him the autocrat he came to be. What times those were, when every one was well disposed toward him, and no upbraiding mentor at his elbow.

"How was it," he asked himself, "that the pathos of such a situation as that going on in the Williams' tent, in their pitiful attempts at making merry, did not more appeal to him?" His brain apprehended it well enough, but it seemed at times as if his sensibilities had become atrophied, that he was become incapable of pity or sympathy. In earlier years he would have felt these things acutely, and that he should be so insensible to them now, struck him suddenly as of a curious lack in his mental equipment. He had grown coarser with the years. As a boy, when he saw anything painful it was with an instantaneous response of sympathy. There was a lame girl who walked with a crutch, who used to come into his father's office occasionally, whom he never saw in those years without a lump coming in his throat. He had let these finer feelings die down in him in the life of selfish gratification he had been leading.

"Might not this explain," he asked himself, "his lessened capacity for enjoyment?" Not alone enjoyment, might it not lie at the bottom of his

entire failure in life—his failure to achieve anything in his chosen profession of art, as well as in every other relation?

"All art," said the Master once, who, on invitation of a score of American art students, among whom Branscombe was numbered, had consented to come to their studio once a week to criticise their work—"all art is largely a question of—shall I say, *perceptibilité—sensibilité*? And this is as essential in appreciating it as in creating it. Art, ever beckoning us on, has evidently been given us to enable us to develop the higher part of our nature. To create, you have to be more alive than the average man. Your American poet with the odd name, Longman—ah yes! Longfellow—voiced this idea beautifully in that little classic which he called the Psalm of Life."

And with it all he felt himself to be as cold and hard as an icicle. There was a Christmas story by a New England authoress he had been reading in his magazine that Christmas eve, all about simple village folk who had discovered another in a most unfortunate position. The gist of the story was to the effect that, in the humanizing touch of their sympathy, in their ready response to the mute appeal of a tortured soul, they had found their own blessedness, forgetting their troubles and disappointments therein.

Guitar and voices were finally resolved into a wobbly, unsteady rendering of the good old German Christmas hymn,

Silent Night,
Hallowed Night.

His thoughts reverted to a Christmas spent in the Black Forest the first year he went abroad, and his pulses leaped as he recalled the *a capella* rendering of the fine old hymn at the midnight service in the church.

Stille Nacht,
Heil'ge Nacht.

The swing and the rhythmic motion they had given to the next but last line—

Wo der Erlöser erschien!

The influence of the silent holy night was stealing in on him, taking him at unawares.

Wo der Erlöser erschien!

It was a dry land somewhat like Arizona, a pastoral land—he had visited it on one of the Mediterranean tours—the stars shining brightly as here.

How the atmosphere seemed surcharged with the kindly Christmas spirit one toward the other among that simple Black Forest village folk! He recalled walking back, in the moonlight, through the crisp snow, with the family of the good burgher with whom he was stopping; the *Mütterchen* and the others ahead, Annchen—those sweet German diminutives! the tenderness they convey! tall, pretty, fair-haired, roguish Annchen at his side, and his eyes glistened as he remembered how she had kissed him in the doorway, taking him at unawares with her *Weihnachtskuss,* and then had scampered away with a merry laugh, leaving him to gaze stupidly after for a moment, until his brain took in the situation, upon which he had overtaken her, repaying the kiss with interest.

And the Christmas tree, that had been prepared during the afternoon by Annchen and the maid with great secrecy behind locked doors, and which was lit up by the *Väterchen* himself, who remained home from the service for the purpose so that the distribution might take place as soon as they entered the house. Was there ever such another Christmas tree, with its myriad candles, its gilded walnuts, its red apples and candy animals! And the delight of the children over the little gifts they had received—would he ever forget it! or his own either, which was scarcely less though less noisily

expressed, on receiving the wonderful stein from Annchen's fairy hands.

There was a *Schnitzler Schule* there, with a Herr Professor in charge, who was already becoming known, and who had since become famous, but had stayed on, preferring the quiet life of work and meditation to anything that the outside world had to offer. He remembered being told by him how his mother had importuned him to leave there and go to Dresden, where was a wider field, and where he could take a more prominent place in the world—and how, in reply, he had quoted from Goethe in support of his position, *Es bildet sich ein talent in die stille.*

The Herr Professor had seemed to take a fancy to him, and had invited him to remain for a year and pursue his studies under his direction, offering to give him every facility. The friendship of such a man,—what might it not have been worth in the development of his character and in the bringing out and cultivation of his talent! For there must have been talent, he reflected, to lead such a man like the Herr Professor to encourage him to take up the subject under his own supervision. Men of genius always like to aid in the development of talent in others, often giving their services gratuitously to further the cause, but they make short work of the dullards, as was evidenced by

a little incident which had occurred in his class where the Master had advised a forward and overconfident student to go back to "America" and open a grocery store, telling him that art was not for him.

How delightfully the world had opened out toward him in those days, where all showed him a friendly side, where as yet there was no mentor at his elbow continually charging him with his derelictions, where as yet there were no derelictions to speak of.

And Annchen; tall, fair-haired, roguish Annchen—the charm that invests the pure woman like an aureole, that pervades her like the subtle fragrance of a rose—is there anything in God's universe, he thought, equal to this? It had seemed to him at times as if she too had shown some preference for him in spite of her roguishness and tantalizing manner. And to turn away from an idyllic life like this when he might have remained and studied his art with Annchen ever at his side—to turn his back on it when he might have remained and become part of it—to leave this idyllic life and go back to the Latin Quarter and become entangled in its drinking-bouts, its sham duels, its grisettes and all the rest of it!

The tinkle of the guitar continued, interrupted at times by the low murmur of voices. Later, one

of the boys sang a funny song. Then he sang a verse from a sentimental song, rendered with a Hibernian accent.

On the Day itself, the Camp had a dinner in common to which indeed he had been asked by Mrs. Williams, who had taken the lead in the matter. When he declined, on the plea that he intended being absent from Camp all the day, she had smilingly told him that she would lay a plate for him anyway, and hoped he might get back in time to participate. Had he known of the ache in her heart—of the mother-love—of the heart-hunger for the child left behind, he might have marveled again at the power of repression here exhibited. He returned an hour or so before sundown and saw the long improvised table on sawhorses placed outside the large tent, decorated with sprays of greasewood and a few belated wild flowers, and was tendered a glass of wine in passing. And though some of the little party were destined never to see the holiday come round again, no considerations of the kind seemed to have interfered with their enjoyment of the day. To most of them it was their first Christmas under the new conditions of illness and privation, and that they could put so good a face on the matter was a marvel indeed.

He commended the bravery of it though.

These men were an object-lesson to him and a reproach. He might learn from them. With everything in his favor he had made a mess of his life, while they, with everything against them, managed still to extract some enjoyment out of it.

Although in these speculations he was as yet mainly analytical, the humanitarian side of the question began gradually to appeal to him. In the old life he had not been in the habit of thinking much about others—their troubles and sorrows had concerned him but little. True to the old traditions he had thought only of himself. To win out in the game of life you had to look out for yourself: the stragglers were nothing to you. No doubt they deserved their fate when they were unable to keep up with the procession. A nice time you would have of it if you hampered yourself with every one who needed your help. This had been the gist of his philosophy, and of those by whom his life had been governed. Now, however, that he was passing through the fire himself, he gradually became aware of the kinship of suffering, recognizing it instinctively in others, and finding later, strangely enough, that when he shared another's burden, his own was lightened thereby.

One day, while going for water, his Indian boy

being gone for the day, he overtook the Deacon, who was bent on the same errand, but was resting under a mesquite tree. Silently, it must be confessed rather shamefacedly, feeling very much like a good boy out of a Sunday-school book, he took up the empty bucket and brought it, filled, to the young man's tent. From that time the Deacon carried no more water. The two empty buckets that each night stood on the bench outside his tent were always, as by a miracle, full when he rose in the morning. Being a person of discernment he said nothing about this to Branscombe, or to any of the others in the Camp. It relieved him of a great difficulty, however, as he had been specially enjoined by his physician against lifting or carrying, the possibility of a hemorrhage being pointed out to him should he do this.

To Branscombe the two holidays just passed—Thanksgiving and Christmas—had been judgment days in which conscience and the remnant of virtue still existing within him had questioned and lashed him anew. The inward drama would have to continue—the mentor at his elbow remain, awaiting a definite outcome. And the dénouement, when the drama came to its end?

For he looked forward to an end to the inward conflict. Surely this state of things could not always go on thus. A time must come, provided he

did his part, when at least there would be peace, when if not happiness, there might be contentment.

Soon after Branscombe's acquaintance with the Deacon began, he proposed to the latter that he move his tent nearer, and that they mess together. The advantages of having a companion in camp life were so obvious to a man of the Deacon's condition and temperament that he grasped at the opportunity, although it was done in opposition to the advice of the others in the Camp.

It did not take Branscombe long to discover his partner's worth and to respond to it. He came to enjoy his camping experiences with the Deacon. They did their own work for the most part, the cooking in especial. In these matters the Deacon was the instructor, his partner being a willing, if at first not very capable, neophyte. Nothing that he had ever eaten at Sherry's tasted half so good, it seemed to Branscombe, as the cup of coffee made by his own hands, after his cold bath in the morning. Whenever he made a dish that turned out well—the coffee is an instance and there were several other things in which he soon became adept —it seemed a kind of triumph to him, this man who had so long lived an idle, useless life.

The vigorous health that reasserted itself in the new life needed an outlet which horseback

riding was not sufficient to supply, and he supplemented it by wood-chopping, and other homely but necessary camp work. He was apt in learning, and soon took over most of the cooking, so that very little remained for the Deacon to do.

He enjoyed the gradually growing friendship with his partner which the exigencies of camp life brought about. The Deacon's character, he told himself, was pure gold. Branscombe's intimates heretofore had not been of this sort; had been indeed of a much baser metal; more like brass not to put too fine a point upon it, and he appreciated him all the more for the comparison.

He sometimes amused himself with speculating as to what his former friends would say, could they see him at his present occupation. How would Bainbridge and Winslow regard him, could they see him chopping the tough mesquite wood? He recalled how they had talked during the previous summer about their contemplated trip to Canada when winter came, for moose. They called it camping, although each probably took his man along, and they would have guides also. He knew they would talk when they got back, as long as any one would listen, of their camping experiences; as if camping amounted to anything unless you fried the bacon and eggs yourself and made the coffee. Mlle. Fifine—Miss Pinkie—but

why go into these details? perhaps the less said about them the better.

The alternations of work and sleep—the satisfaction of it all! He welcomed the prospect of doing things as soon as he arose in the morning, and when the day was over, the work had tired him enough to make him enjoy the prospect of sleep. He felt that he could never sufficiently appreciate the beneficent effects of each on mind and body. The desert can heal lesions other than those of the lungs.

It was a fine intuition, he thought, that had brought him to the Southwest, where seemed to be the atmosphere and environment suited to his needs. He soon perceived, that when once he had adapted himself to its conditions and had assimilated them, when once the lesson came to be mastered—that lesson which had been so long in learning—the new life of the Southwest would be satisfying in a sense and to a degree that he had never experienced before.

CHAPTER VI

THE little colony had its tragedies, its heart sorrows—its measure of agony and remorse, as well as its fluctuations of hope and joy; it had its instances of blind wilfulness and selfish egotism, as well as of heroic self-abnegation. The limitations and shortcomings of this human nature of ours were as much in evidence here as out in the wide world.

In the Latimer tents there were occasional differences,—perhaps the brothers had grown apart in the year in which they had been separated,—or it may be that their illness, making them self-centered, had paved the way for divergences of opinion. Most likely, it was the dry, electrical atmosphere which, making them nervous, had the effect of rendering Percival irritable and Carlyle less forbearing. There was nothing violent,—not what could be called quarreling,—but the differences were pronounced enough to keep the brothers apart at times.

A frequent cause of dissension arose from the fact that Carlyle, the elder of the two, having

studied up the disease and the *rationale* of the treatment, desired the other to conform to his conception of the case. The younger had his own opinions on this, as on most subjects, and was generally ready to argue out any topic on the slightest provocation, from a question in football to a rise of a degree or two in his temperature. From heated argument, it was often but a short step to recrimination, Carlyle always blaming himself bitterly afterward, and always resolving to be more circumspect and patient in the future.

After all, Percival was only a boy yet, and had always been indulged, reflected this sage of twenty-six. And too, was not he partly responsible for this argumentative disposition which the other exhibited? For had he not encouraged it already in the lad's childhood? It had seemed so precocious to hear the boy take the opposite side against his father, that he had often in those times started the conversational ball a-rolling with no other object than to involve the two in one of these word contests.

Perhaps the father enjoyed it too. The boys never remembered their mother, and the father never mentioned her. He was almost a recluse, caring only for his books and his boys, as he used to tell them. He had been something of an invalid for years before his death, and remained at home

most of the time. As he wanted to have them near him as much as possible, he taught them until they were well-grown lads and his influence over them remained paramount.

Carlyle never was the same after his father's death, which had occurred some years before. Father and sons lived after a happy-go-lucky fashion on a small annuity which the father had received from his father's estate. Carlyle's paternal grandfather had been a Forty-niner, who had achieved quite a fortune and had then settled down in San Francisco. There were but two children, both boys, Carlyle's father being the younger. He must have displeased his father in some way, as the bulk of the fortune went to the elder son, only the small annuity going to the younger.

The Latimer menage would have been open to criticism from the standpoint of a good housekeeper. There was one maid who had been there from time immemorial so far as the boys were concerned, who had her own way about everything, whose fiat on any matter was never even questioned. The carpets were shabby and sometimes threadbare; the windows were not washed as often as good housekeeping warranted; the table linen, originally of fine quality, now worn thin, was at times joined together in the middle; but there was a wealth of affection from father to sons, unex-

pressed, inexpressible, which made up for all other deficiencies. This the boys accepted as a matter of course, never rightly prizing it until it had been taken from them, as is often the case with our best possessions.

When Carlyle was twenty, a position was obtained for him in the office of one of the transcontinental railway lines, and where he had remained ever since. On the death of his father, which had occurred when he was twenty-three and Percival eighteen, a position was secured for the latter in a bank, and Carlyle endeavored to take the father's place toward his younger brother.

That young gentleman, on attaining the bank position and the munificent salary of forty dollars per month which went with it, soon developed social aspirations as became a Native Son of the Golden West with so distinguished a grandfather back of him (not to mention the Archbishop), and Carlyle soon found that his self-constituted relation toward Percival—a relation very much like that of the hen that has hatched out ducklings —was no sinecure. While not extravagant, Percival soon developed a fondness for dress-suits in the evening, enjoyed dancing extremely, always managing to have the prettiest girls as partners, taking these same pretty girls to the theatre and out driving as occasion offered, and in general,

disporting himself as the grandson of a successful Forty-niner, with first-rate social connections might be expected to do in a city such as San Francisco was in its old-time splendor.

Thus Percy, for about a year and a half. Then his mode of life began to tell on him. The close confinement in the bank, the frequent dances with the attendant want of sleep—these together with an inherited tendency toward tuberculosis (the father had died of the disease) were doing their work. The sequel came one day without any warning, in the shape of a hemorrhage, while on his way to the bank. It occurred on a crowded thoroughfare, and he was immediately taken into a drug store where restoratives were applied, after which he was sent to a hospital and Carlyle notified.

Percy's faults were all on the surface. The father was a man of fine character, and the relation between him and his sons was too intimate and long continued for either of the boys to go very far wrong. But out of a salary of five hundred you cannot spend a thousand a year and have an easy time of it. This was the problem that young Latimer was trying to solve, and it proved to be too complicated a one for his arithmetic. After he got to work and as a direct result of it, the boys had to part with their home. The

house had already been mortgaged in their father's lifetime, but real estate was increasing in value and the father always felt that the equity in the home would be a nice little nest-egg for them until they could get on their feet.

But Percival's debts were piling up, and when his illness came on—his attack had been noticed in all the papers—the creditors became pressing. Carlyle guarded the honor of the family jealously, a sentiment which had been carefully instilled into him by his father, who often told him that he had no fear that it would be knowingly jeopardized by either of them. These debts must be paid at once, before Percy's superiors at the bank should learn of them and institute inquiry. Percy's honesty must not be questioned. The only way out of the difficulty that he could see was to put a second mortgage on the house, rent it, the income of which would be required to pay interest charges and taxes, sell or store the books and furniture and go boarding.

The proceeds from the mortgage paid these debts, and left a few hundreds over for emergencies, but the boys were adrift. It did not matter so much for the younger, this giving up the old home, since, as soon as he would be able to travel, he was to leave for Arizona; but to Carlyle it was like parting soul and body—giving up this home,

every nook and corner of which was endeared to him by associations with his father. Unlike Percival, he was always best satisfied at home, spending most of his evenings in the musty old library, a course, however, which was as conducive to the development of the disease as was Percival's.

When Carlyle found that he also was attacked by it, the discovery having been made some months subsequent to Percival's departure for Arizona, he met the situation in a business-like manner. There must be no half-way measures in this, he reflected. He had Percy to look after now, as well as himself, and if his health went, what would Percy do? He could take no chances. He must get well at all hazards on the lad's account.

He stated his case frankly to his chief at the outset of the disease, who, interested in his recovery, having slated him for advancement, gave him a three months' leave of absence with salary, assuring him in addition that, when he returned, he would make his work lighter for another six months. He also sought good medical advice, fortifying this by procuring the best books on the subject of his disease, mastering their contents, not, however, until he had procured a medical dictionary. When he learned that tuberculosis is largely a disease of malnutrition, and that superalimentation is one of the forces by which it can

be successfully combated, he took up the study of dietetics. He also moved to Berkeley, slept out of doors, and made a point of being out in the air as much as possible.

His first impulse had been to go to Arizona where his brother was, but this the physician combated, telling him that it was not worth while taking the long railway journey for so short a stay —that by living rightly, he would do better to remain where he was.

In a few months he had the satisfaction of being told that the disease was arrested, but he continued his mode of life as if the case were still doubtful.

The result of his medical studies had been faithfully transmitted to Percy in weekly letters, to which the other responded regularly. When summer came, and it was necessary to leave Arizona, Carlyle procured a pass for him, enabling him to spend the heated term in the foothills of the Kings River country in California, where he joined him on a month's vacation.

A plan for spending the coming winter in Arizona with Percy, which Carlyle had been considering, was decided on, on this trip. Percy had not made the progress toward recovery which Carlyle had expected. He needed looking after he reflected. The world had not been very bright for

Carlyle since his father's death. He must not lose Percy too; there'd be nothing then worth living for. They needed each other, and would be supplementary one to the other. He must look after his own health so as to be able to look after Percy. A winter in Arizona together would probably improve the health of each, so that they might live in Southern California thereafter. In another year, his attorney assured him, their house would sell for a few thousands above the encumbrances, and then they would buy a ranch on which both might live in comfort.

Carlyle's solicitude about his brother's health—though appreciated by the younger—became at times irksome to him, especially when it involved any curtailment of his freedom of action. Percival's temperature and pulse-rate were taken twice daily by the elder brother, and when any variation from the normal appeared, the younger knew what to expect. If it were no more than three-fifths of a degree above, he might sit about but not take any exercise. If a full degree, he was so earnestly importuned to go to bed for a few hours that the young fellow, impatient of restraint, sometimes answered back sharply instead of complying.

"What do you suppose the Almighty put brains into my head for unless to be used? Don't you

think I know something too? I know how I feel better than you do."

Always after one of their little *rencontres*—which occurred periodically—each, taking on himself the fault, would endeavor to make expiation by doing something which he knew the other would like, Percy being usually the more demonstrative of the two. Often his contrition led him, unthinkingly, to take on more of the camp work than had been portioned out to him, and Carlyle, though aware that this would have the effect of raising his temperature, would at such times not have the heart to disapprove, not wishing to hurt him or have it appear that any displeasure remained.

Being handy with tools he would put up a shelf, or add some other convenience to the menage so as to make the work easier for Carlyle, who did most of it. Or he would make a store of kindlings, enough to last a week, cutting the sagebrush for the purpose, which cost nothing and burned readily. Carlyle had indeed demurred to this once, on the ground that it was full of dust, which was disseminated and breathed when cutting it with a hatchet, but Percival met this objection the next time by cutting the stalks off close to the ground with a saw.

But his compunction usually took the form of

extra precautions as regarded his health, since this was a matter in which Carlyle was most deeply concerned. Lying down for a few hours in the afternoon was a form of punishment which the young penitent often voluntarily underwent. This really was a penance for him; how much of one, Carlyle himself could not measure. The afternoon was the time when girls sometimes came to the Camp, visiting one or the other there, and he had been in the vicinity long enough to have made many acquaintances among them. And there were some very pretty girls in town too; not the equal of those in San Francisco—that could hardly be expected; nothing any more was like what it had been in those halcyon days of health, not even the girls,—but all in all there were some very attractive ones as things went now, and they made the one bright feature in his life.

Almost any afternoon, some one or other of these delectable acquaintances might drive in on their way somewhere else, and then it would be very agreeable to be around. Of course, they never set out for the sole purpose of visiting the Camp. They took it in on their way, and sometimes they took in the young fellow too, in making the statement. At times they remained so long looking at the mesquite trees, or playing with the bob-cat which Percival had received from a hunter

when but a few days old, that in leaving they took the direction from whence they came; but that may have been due to absent-mindedness.

Always when the noon meal was over he donned his best gray flannel shirt and greenest tie in anticipation of visitors, doing the honors of the Camp, when they came, with an air of proprietorship that well became him.

Percival was not doing so well lately; he was running some temperature, and Carlyle was deeply concerned about it. His digestive powers too, were not in good condition. Carlyle was convinced that much of his trouble was due to the excessive use of coffee, of which both were very fond. The fact that Percival was hemorrhagic made it specially important that his bodily health be maintained at its highest standard, so as to prevent a recurrence of a hemorrhage, or in the event of one, to enable him the better to stand the strain. It seemed certain that coffee was at the bottom of his digestive troubles and should be discontinued.

But how to accomplish it? He might make the statement that it was injurious, and stop making it any more, but it was by no means certain that Master Percy would let it end there. It would be more than likely that he would make it himself in that event, and make it stronger, and the last state would be worse than the first. It was a case

that called for diplomacy; he must go slow in the matter. Precipitate action might spoil all, thought Carlyle sagely.

"The way we drink coffee," said he one morning at breakfast, beginning his campaign by reaching for his third cup, "is an inordinate and sinful affection. We ought to cut it out."

"Once you get the bugs into you, you're just called on to give up everything you like," responded Percival. "But I'd hate to give up my coffee. Remember how papa used to like it when we were on the Yosemite trips? He used to say we made better coffee than Marie."

This was not a very good beginning, but Carlyle bided his time.

"I think it makes us nervous. I'm not sleeping so well of late, and it's due to the coffee, I'm sure. Making it ourselves, we drink more of it than if we had to ask for it," continued Carlyle.

"I don't think it's the coffee," replied Percival, taking the other side from force of habit. "Why doesn't it affect me? I sleep like a top, except when I have to cough."

"I wish I could say as much," asseverated Carlyle. "I toss around in bed sometimes for a long while before sleep comes to me."

"It may be that the dry climate makes one nervous."

"I have heard that theory advanced," continued Carlyle, "and it may be so; but in that case, it's all the more necessary to avoid anything that will aggravate it. I'm sure it's the coffee that's doing it. How annoyed you were this morning over the loss of that collar button," he wound up.

"Collar buttons are at the bottom of most of my annoyances," replied Percival whimsically. "To have only just the number you need, and then for the best one to roll through a crack in the floor, as happened me this morning when I was putting on my shirt, is enough to make any one mad. I don't know how it is, I'm always in trouble about collar buttons. Buy a quart of 'em the next time you go to town, and then perhaps I'll have one once in a while."

The talk then drifted to other subjects, until brought back again to the main issue by Carlyle.

"Father used to think that coffee made him nervous," said he.

"Yes, but he didn't think it so strongly as to lead him to give it up. He kept right on drinking it all the same."

"I'm almost sure that it makes me wakeful at times," asserted Carlyle. "There's nothing I value so much as good, sound sleep. I'd willingly give up the coffee to be able to sleep again as I used to."

" It's not the coffee," replied Percival with the superior wisdom of twenty-one. " You allow yourself to think too much on these things. You keep yourself awake studying about them."

" I believe I'll try cereal coffee for a while anyway," persisted Carlyle. " I'm told it's almost as good as the other, and I'll soon get used to it."

Percival eyed him suspiciously. " Do you mean that you're trying to make me give it up? Is that what you're driving at? Well, you just won't do it; I'll tell you that straight. Make it raw eggs now, and I'll follow you gladly. Why do you always try to make me do what I don't want to? "

" I wasn't thinking of you at all," replied Carlyle mendaciously, " at least not in any special way. But it seems rather effeminate to be so fond of coffee, and I'm going to cut it out myself. I think I'll like the cereal when I get used to it."

" You can do as you like. I'm going to have my cup of coffee for breakfast the same as I always have. I'm not going to be cut off from everything. If you want to drink that kind of stuff you can, but that's no reason why I should. And I ain't going to take no six raw eggs a day any more either. These doctor fellows don't know everything," continued Percival, kicking out of the traces entirely.

Carlyle, contrary to Percival's expectation, made

no response to this, and the subject was dropped; but when he returned from town that afternoon he brought a package of the cereal coffee and a new coffee-pot, making himself a portion on the following morning. For his brother he made the regular kind in the French coffee-pot as usual. Carlyle made the breakfasts, urging Percival to lie abed until the meal was nearly ready. On this particular morning Percival partook of his coffee without comment, and both kinds were made again on the following morning. Then Percival, seeing that no opposition was forthcoming, relented sufficiently to ask for a cup of the despised cereal, adding that he'd like to try the darned stuff, he'd seen it advertised so much. On the following day, both kinds were made again as usual, upon which he said, half petulantly, as if to conceal his embarrassment at capitulating so readily, "Why make two kinds every day? One's as good as the other. If you prefer the cereal, I'd just as lief drink that as the other. I believe it's coffee just the same as the other. Anyway, it's just about as good," and cereal coffee carried the day.

But their differences did not always turn out so happily as in the case of the coffee episode. One morning, while at breakfast, there had been some words over a comparatively trifling matter, upon which Carlyle rose from the table without finish-

ing his meal, and left the tent. Percival, immediately conscience-smitten, started up to call him back, but that curious reticence that is so often observed between brothers restrained him. He was greatly distressed; he knew himself to be in the wrong. In stirring up Carl like this, he felt like a person who had committed a crime; no atonement that he could make, it seemed to him, would be adequate. Carlyle would not reproach him—it would be easier to bear if he would; then he might justify himself. "Why do I try him so?" he asked himself with bitter compunction; "Carlyle is usually so patient with me. I've often talked in like manner during the past few weeks, and nothing has resulted; he must be getting tired of it now. I am always doing such things; and Carlyle has lost his health working for me, to give me a chance for recovery. I'll be more careful in the future; it shall not happen again."

Filled with regret he looked about to see what he could do in requital. He would do up the dishes, and have the tent in ship-shape against Carl's return. And every afternoon this week he would lie abed until five, until it was time to go and get the milk. And he would stop smoking. He knew that nothing he could do would be so acceptable to Carl, or show his sincerity so much as this. In furtherance of his good resolution, he

took down his pipe—a Christmas present from one of his confrères in the bank—from the joist where it hung over the photo of one of the pretty San Francisco girls—and put it in the stove. Gathering up his cigarettes and tobacco, he took them to White, saying he had sworn off from smoking and had no more use for the articles.

On his return he began making preparations for putting the tent in order, but when he essayed to fill the teakettle to have hot water for washing the dishes, he found that the water-bucket was empty. Percival did not carry water; there was danger of hemorrhage (in the Camp vernacular, a hemorrhage was generally alluded to as a ruby, and the hemorrhagic individual as a Rubáiyát) in his case, so Carlyle always did this, but without thinking of consequences, he grasped the bucket and started on his self-imposed task.

Carlyle, walking off his displeasure by a cut across the desert where he could come out on a road, was by this time well out of the way of the Camp and did not see his brother going for water. Percival carried but one bucket, but he had to walk slowly, and, as he was anxious to get back and have the work done before Carl's return, he did not stop to rest as he should have done. The unaccustomed exertion, combined with his agitation of the previous half-hour, was too much for him,

and, when about opposite the Deacon's tent, the blood gushed forth in a stream.

Luckily he was observed by Branscombe (he himself was unable to call or articulate a word), who, with the Deacon's assistance, put him into the latter's bed, and then ran for Fillmore. The usual restoratives were applied, and a hypodermic injection of morphine given, to slow up the heart action. Fillmore always carried the materials for this about with him, against just such an emergency, and soon had him comfortable. While he was strapping the area where the lesion was with adhesive plaster, Branscombe, who had hastily thrown the saddle over his pony, was galloping into town for ice, knowing that an ice-bag over the affected region would materially aid in preventing a recurrence of the trouble.

Meanwhile, Carlyle had walked himself out of his momentary anger. The cool, pure air of the desert felt good to him, and he prolonged his walk as far as a ranch where almonds were sold, in order to take some back with him. On regaining his composure, he began, like Percival, to regret his part in the little bout, and resolved that if similar provocation occurred again, he would keep himself in hand—he would never again betray such impatience.

The wound occasioned by the death of Carlyle's

father had not yet healed, and the occurrences of the morning had caused his sorrow over the loss to well up in him again as at first. And the worrying that Percival would undergo on account of their little tiffs would have a bad effect on his health. He was already running some temperature. The thought to Carlyle was like a sword-thrust in his vitals. "Why is it, that, knowing the right, I so often do the wrong?" he asked himself bitterly—as many another has done under such circumstances—remorse, sorrow, contrition, coming uppermost, obliterating the provocation.

By the time he reached the ranch-house where he intended purchasing almonds, he was salving his conscience by making plans which would inure to Percy's quicker recovery. He must get him to take more raw eggs. Percy did not take kindly to them, and now that the price was high (they usually remained at forty cents the dozen during January) did not take the quantity that he should. He would serve them to him in the form of desserts. Percival liked sweet things, and, by beating the whites only, which were pure albumen, and what he needed, with a little sugar and some flavoring extract, vanilla or orange, he might make something palatable which the lad would relish.

The ranchman detained him showing him some

new arrangements in the poultry houses. The boys were planning to go into poultry raising in California, when they should be able to work again, and meanwhile lost no opportunity of gathering information on the subject. On nearing Camp he thought how he would break the ice by telling about the poultry houses the first thing on entering the tent, calling him "Pete" as his father used to do occasionally, and then everything would be as before.

When he returned to Camp the morning was more than half spent, and he was a little surprised to see the breakfast-table standing as when he had left it. It struck him as strange, too, that Percy should not be in sight. Ordinarily after one of these occurrences, when one or the other had returned even after a half-hour's absence, the other was sure to be in the tent, and each then would have something to tell the other, to show that all antagonism had gone.

With that accuracy of vision characteristic of methodical people, the slight variation from the ordinary occasioned by the absence of the water-bucket and the pipe, changed the appearance of the interior to Carlyle, without his consciousness at first taking in the fact of their absence, or wherein the change lay.

Mechanically he lifted the stove-lid to replenish

the fire, and saw the remains of Percy's pipe in the ashes, which caused him to deprecate more than before their recent misunderstanding, on seeing this evidence of the lad's contrition.

The consumptive has a sword hanging over his head all the time. The knowledge that he holds to existence by only a slender thread sharpens his vision preternaturally to the dangers which encompass him. When Carlyle noticed the absence of the water-bucket, a great fear surged up in him, and the little divergences from the ordinary or the expected which had confronted him on entering the tent seemed now to point to disaster for Percy.

But before he had time to formulate any plan of action, Mrs. Williams came in, having been charged by Fillmore with the task of informing him about the misfortune that had overtaken Percival. She was in a position to reassure him now, however, as more than two hours had elapsed and there had been no recurrence of the hemorrhage. He was resting comfortably, and there was every reason to believe that he would pull through, she told him.

Carlyle, with the self-restraint which had become a habit with him, gave but little outward sign of perturbation, but went at once to the Deacon's tent, where he found his brother lying in a kind of

stupor from the effects of the opiate. Fillmore, who had remained within call ever since the occurrence, assured him that there was no danger, and that if nothing untoward intervened, he might be moved on the cot to his own tent in the afternoon. He then suggested to him that he get things in readiness for the transfer, and asked him to make some beef tea.

Carlyle went about these duties in a kind of daze. In these first hours he felt no acute sensation whether of anxiety or pain. He knew with a kind of prescience that it would come later, especially if Percy were to die or be seriously ill, but for the present he was numb, now that his worst fears had been realized. He went about his camp work mechanically, Fillmore remaining with the patient, and at noon, when Mrs. Williams came and asked him to take dinner with them, he accompanied her to her tent, talking on ordinary topics, until that lady had some difficulty in keeping down her indignation at such callousness. In commenting on it afterwards to her husband, she remarked that one would think that hemorrhages were an every-day matter in his family he took it so calmly.

When Percival awoke about mid-afternoon, the transfer to his own tent had been made, and he found himself in his accustomed surroundings with Carlyle sitting near. He turned inquiring

eyes about him at first; then a wave of recollection flooded his consciousness, and, reaching out his hand from under the blankets, grasped that of Carlyle, who returned an answering pressure. He had made his amends. His suffering had been his atonement, and the reconciliation was effected.

But in the evening, when Branscombe looked in at Carlyle's tent to ask him over for a while, Fillmore still remaining with the invalid, he found him lying prostrate on his cot, writhing in an agony of remorse, his hands clutching the blankets spasmodically, his body shaken by sobs; Branscombe retreated abashed, feeling as if, in intruding on such grief, he had violated a sanctity.

No trace of this agitation was visible however when he came into Percy's tent a few minutes later in response to a call from Fillmore, who had been prompted thereto by Branscombe. The same calm, imperturbable demeanor that ordinarily was his characterized him now, and Branscombe marvelled anew at the repression and self-control that were here exhibited.

CHAPTER VII

FILLMORE was kept so busy these days by his professional duties, that he forgot the very existence of the L. A. A. In truth, interest in the organization languished just now. The tension produced by young Latimer's illness made it impossible to assume these light-hearted attitudes. Two lives were hanging in the balance, and, while this continued, the fellows ceased playing pranks and became serious. Latimer was improving slowly, and with the good care that he was receiving would probably pull through, but, in the same ratio in which he was gaining, Alford was losing.

"I've just come from Alford's tent," said Fillmore one morning, taking a stroll with White. "He has that high temperature regularly now every afternoon, although there's probably some temperature all the while. How he can stand it with never a fire in his tent and none too many blankets is more than I can see. Yet he says he's comfortable. I wonder if he has any relatives. Some one said he has a brother in North Carolina,

but no one seems to know anything of his affairs. He really ought to be in the hospital where he could have the right attention. I see him two or three times a day, and do what I can, but he oughtn't to be alone at night."

"I think his funds are running low," responded White, "and he's afraid of the expense of the hospital. He told me that you had advised his going there, but he said he couldn't afford it. He's failing, and his brother ought to be communicated with."

"Can't you try and get his address?" asked Fillmore. "It wouldn't do for me to ask him. Being his medical adviser he'd know right away that there's no further hope for him. He's been due now on the other side for the past week or more. As it is, it's wonderful how he keeps up. He's pure grit. The case is miliary, and is rapidly progressing to a fatal termination. Manage it in some way to get the brother's address and have him come here."

Accordingly, White elaborated a most adroit plan to bring this about which would leave Alford none the wiser as to his motive for obtaining it. It was all done surprisingly easy, but when he had jotted the address in his note-book, Alford said calmly: "It's better for you to have it, so that when it's all over, you can wire him."

Alford was indeed pure grit, as Fillmore had said. The conditions in which he found himself called for grit. It was too true, as White surmised, that his funds were running low. The hospital was out of the question. The accommodations there were limited, and if there had been free beds, none would have been available, as each would probably have been spoken for a dozen times over.

The dread which had assailed him for the past year as he saw his scanty hoard diminishing, of one day coming to absolute want, was fast resolving itself into a certainty, and he set himself to face it with a determination born of despair. Yet how he clung to life! He was so weak now that he could do very little in the way of preparing his own food, and for a day or two had lived principally on raw eggs and milk, which was quite sufficient for him in his condition, Fillmore told him.

He had kept his bed the entire time for the past week or more on account of his temperature and general weakness. The constant fever was wearing him out. Then it began to be feared each evening that he might not live the night through. Fillmore usually called on him in the evening before going to bed, and the look of wistfulness in the sick man's eyes, full of a dumb

entreaty not to be left to die alone, often haunted his slumbers. There were times when he was unable to withstand this mute appeal and he would sit with him until midnight.

One evening he brought in a dinner-bell he had gotten from town that day, and put it on the stand beside the sick man's cot. Alford understood.

"Should you feel worse and want anything overnight, ring the bell and I'll come. Some one or other of us will hear it and will call me should I be sleeping," Fillmore said to him, and Alford turned grateful eyes on him.

On the following night, when Fillmore offered to sit with him until midnight, he insisted on his going, saying that he felt better, and thought he might have a good night's rest. Somehow, the bell seemed to inspire confidence. It was like a wire connecting him with his fellows. The bell remained on the stand near the cot along with phials and other sick-bed paraphernalia, and came to be associated with the idea of his death in the minds of his visitors.

But the young fellow lingered on. Each morning for a week, White and Fillmore, whose tents adjoined, sought in the other's eyes on meeting, the information that each feared to receive. Then one morning White, bringing a light breakfast

to the sick man's tent, saw at a glance that all was over. The end had come quickly and painlessly by heart failure.

"How long ago is it since your illness first began to show itself?" Branscombe asked his partner one morning shortly after young Latimer's mishap with the hemorrhage. They were sitting in the cook tent lingering over a late breakfast, and had been discussing Latimer's condition and his chances for recovery. Fillmore gave out encouraging reports in regard to this, stating that he was making steady progress and that he might be up and around again in a few weeks if everything went well.

"It's somewhat over a year now since I first knew of it from a physician. I had been feeling ill for a few months, and my wife insisted on an examination being made. This revealed a slight lesion; the trouble was clearly tuberculous, but incipient, and as such, the strongest prospect of recovery was held out to me."

"But you left your home only last fall?"

"Yes. I came direct to Arizona from there. When the first examination was made, now over a year ago, the doctor advised me to go to a sanatorium, and took the necessary steps to secure me admission. At that time the prognosis was most

favorable, and, could I have entered then, I would now probably be graduated as cured."

"How was it that you did not enter?" asked Branscombe.

"There was no vacancy just then in the State Sanatorium, which admits patients at nominal prices, four or five dollars a week. The expensive private ones were out of the question for me; I had only my salary, having given up most of my scholars when my sickness came on. Even my salary would have been continued only to the end of the year had I left town to enter one of these institutions. As there was no vacancy I was put on the waiting list and continued my work meanwhile, carrying out the instructions of my physician so far as I was able."

"And you never got to a sanatorium at all?"

"There may have been a mistake. It is possible my name had been overlooked, although I never had an explanation. At any rate it was nearly six months after my application for admission was made before I was notified of a vacancy. I at once presented myself for admission, but on examination was refused, on the ground that they accepted only incipient cases, and that, as the disease had now progressed beyond that stage, I was not eligible."

"Good God, man! You don't mean to say

that while on the waiting list you had to wait so long that when your turn came around your disease had progressed beyond the incipient stage, and you were refused admission on that ground!" exclaimed Branscombe, repeating the other's words almost verbatim in his astonishment.

"Yes," said the other simply. "The facilities are wholly inadequate to the demands in the low-priced institutions. The physicians at these places affirm, that, as they are unable to accommodate all that apply, it is the part of wisdom to accept only such as offer good chances of recovery. And when you are admitted, it is not final. You enter on a two-weeks' probation so as to afford an opportunity of examining your case. If the prospect for recovery does not seem promising, you may have to leave when your two weeks are up. Do you know what that means to the applicants? It's apt to discourage them so that it's equivalent to a death-sentence at times. It's all figured out scientifically and impersonally, the economic factor coming first."

"The economic factor?" reiterated Branscombe.

"That's the way they put it. They are interested only in making cures, not in prolonging life, which they affirm, is properly the function of the hospital. Each individual cured goes out into the

world again and becomes a worker. He is then of use to the commonwealth, and it has been worth its while saving him. While it is true that genuine cures are effected in the second stage, where the disease has progressed beyond that of incipiency, there is no certainty in the matter, and it is also a slower and more expensive process. As the number of those that can be accommodated is so limited anyway, only those cases that seem most certainly and easily curable are taken."

"It's a great wrong," cried Branscombe with vehemence. "I have not thought much on these subjects heretofore; they have not come my way. Of course the fault is not with the authorities in the institution, but rather with the State. If the State undertakes the work at all, it should be able to take care of as many as apply, no matter what the stage of the disease. I can understand that it may not be desirable in a large institution to mix the advanced cases with the incipients; separate accommodations should be provided the two classes, but these should be adequate for all who apply. To do less than this, is the grossest injustice on those who are refused. To limit the scope of the work to the incipient cases is bad enough, but to be so poorly provided that they cannot even take care of these, so that some, while waiting, are liable to lapse into the stage where

they will not be accepted at all, is a wrong on the helpless that cries out for justice."

"That's many a man's plight exactly," replied his partner calmly. "He sees life slipping away while he's waiting for the chance at the five-dollar-a-week accommodations that he can afford, since he can't afford those at twenty dollars a week offered by the private sanatoriums."

"How can you take it so easily!" he exclaimed. "It's enough to make one's blood boil with the wrong of it!"

"What is there to do?" asked the other calmly. "Do you suppose an invalid can dictate terms? Let me tell you, life looks pretty barren to him. He is on the 'outs' with a vengeance." After a pause he continued: "The situation is such that he soon gets used to injustice; he meets it on all sides. Others hurt him—he doesn't think of reprisal. He endures with what patience he can summon, glad when others are half-way civil to him. Often people are openly hostile to us on the supposition that the disease is infectious. It's not infectious; not even contagious in any right sense of the word. It's communicable, but only through the sputum; when that's guarded against, there's no danger. People act toward us as if we had no rights whatever; they don't care how they hurt us. Most fortunate people are strangers to pity." He

spoke dispassionately, from inner conviction, apparently without bitterness.

"The situation of some of the others in the Camp here," he resumed after a pause, "is very similar. Could they have entered a health camp or sanatorium at once, on discovering their trouble, the outcome in each case would be more favorable, and some, without doubt, would now be cured. As it is, they will continue the struggle for years, to be worsted in the end, most likely. And the money they are now spending is greatly in excess of what it would have cost to cure them, had they gone at it rightly on the start."

"And all for the want of a little planning," mused Branscombe.

"Every one commends gifts to colleges," pursued the other, "and very properly too. The tuition fees of any of the big colleges would not half meet the cost of maintenance. It follows that the work would not be half as efficient as it is, if it were not for the endowments. Not a student at college anywhere, but what is a beneficiary in the sense that he gets something that he does not pay for. Yet the matter of higher education becomes insignificant when compared with the tuberculosis problem. What good is education to a man like me? Wouldn't it be better to be healthy even if I didn't know how to spell anything beyond

two-syllabled words? Of the one hundred and thirty thousand people who die annually of consumption in this country a goodly proportion could without doubt recover and go to work again, if the right facilities at the right time were provided them. Cures in this disease, as is very well known, are no longer problematical; they are being effected every day. It is only a question of some one to plan for the invalid. Money wisely expended in health camps and endowments would be the means of saving thousands of lives annually. So far as securing practical results go, it can be made to accomplish five times as much in this work as in ordinary hospital work in the East."

A hectic flush appeared in his face, and Branscombe endeavored to change the conversation, fearing that he was tiring himself, but he continued after a short interval: "The endowments to the Conservatory enabled me to secure a better musical education than would have been possible otherwise. Had some provision been made to meet the necessities of the situation in the tuberculosis problem as in the former case, who can doubt that I would not now be as well as ever, and earning my way?"

"Just now I should say it was a case for private initiative," said Fillmore, who had come over to borrow some eggs until afternoon when the egg

man would come, and had heard the latter part of the Deacon's discourse. "The individual must be brought to see his obligation in the matter first. Legislation will follow. Already a great interest is being manifested in the work. One sees mention of it constantly in the papers and magazines. This in itself is bound to tell."

"I've passed that kind of thing hitherto," said Branscombe, "but now I begin to see its importance."

"It's as important as any question before the world to-day," rejoined Fillmore. "As an instance, take White, in our Camp here; a man of first-rate ability, with any kind of a fine future before him had he kept his health. Such a man has it in him to contribute much to the world's work. The cost of saving him is infinitesimal in comparison to his value to the community. If the economic factor, which on the whole is not so out of place in the question, were carried out to its logical sequence, it would include the effort to save such men even if they are in the second stage of the disease."

The conversation, following so soon on young Latimer's illness, made a profound impression on Branscombe, acquainting him with the tragic possibilities of the life all about him. He had not half gauged it before, he reflected.

His partner's recital stirred him deeply, and it set him thinking. From the beginning of his acquaintance with the Deacon he had had an intuitive perception of his talents, and had been drawn to him even before they camped together. He recognized in him the artist's nature. Here was a man who might make his mark in the world could he regain his health!

All at once he saw the situation as it was. He had not at all apprehended it before. The tragedy of it! This talented young fellow's life hanging in the balance with all the chances against him unless some one came actively to his aid. And then he saw that he might be this "some one," that it was "up to him," in the Camp parlance, to save his partner's life, if it were to be saved at all; and he accepted the charge without hesitation. To rescue him from the clutches of his disease and restore him to a life of usefulness—here was a work cut ready to hand—a work worthy of his highest powers. It seemed felicitous that it should have come his way, that he should be the instrument by which it might be achieved, and he began to set all his wits to work to accomplish it.

Though shy and undemonstrative, he made it his business to watch over him and see that the medical directions were carefully adhered to. He

saw to it that he had just the diet that he needed, he kept work and worry from him as much as possible, and made various efforts to entertain him. That this intelligent supervision was the result of conferences that Branscombe held with the Deacon's physician was never known by the young man.

The Deacon's case was not so promising a one as was White's, for instance. Temperament has an important influence in the matter. While camping alone, he had been apt to brood on the changes that had come over his life, and had barely managed to hold his own. Branscombe was told by the physician that the outlook was not favorable, but this made him all the more determined to succeed, to match his skill against the enemy's and come out ahead. To this end the young man's wife must come out in the early fall. He would exert himself to get a position for her as organist in some church, and he was sure she could get pupils also. From what he gathered from his partner she had not been well herself of late, probably owing to worries brought about by the husband's illness. No doubt each would be the gainer through her coming.

He recalled the episode of carrying water for the Deacon, which had led to their acquaintance. His partner had told him a number of times since,

what a boon it had been to him, and how, being hemorrhagic, the same thing might have befallen him as had happened to Latimer had he been compelled to continue the practice. A project which had been floating in his mind ever since, now began to assume definite shape, the matter having been hastened by Latimer's mishap. When he saw what a relief it had been to the Deacon not to have to carry water, the thought occurred to him that it would be a great advantage to have a well on the grounds so that no one would have to carry any. This would necessitate owning the land on which the Camp was situated, but that would not be a great matter.

On the morning following the conversation with his partner, just recorded, he proceeded to town to put his project into execution, opening negotiations with the owner for the purchase of the land through an attorney, whom he charged specially to take precautions to prevent his own participation in the matter from becoming known. The affair was soon brought to a successful issue, upon which he made arrangements in regard to the well. This was followed in due course by a windmill and tank, so that the water could be piped to the tents.

Branscombe's health, heretofore fairly good according to the ordinary standards, was greatly

improved by the simple life he was living. The work, which gave him an object in life and made him more contented, the pure air, the sound sleep that comes to the sojourner on the desert—all were factors in a rejuvenation that was as welcome as it was novel. Not since his youth had he known the kind of sleep he now enjoyed. In the vigor that it brought him it was like a recurrence to youth. It was a new experience to this town-bred man, whose strength had been sapped by the town life, who had never known the elation that comes from living out of doors—this tasting the joys of perfect health. In this respect he was getting as much benefit from the desert life as any invalid of them all.

The sanity and wholesomeness of the life—how it appealed to him! Not a day but what he was glad to be here. He often wondered why the brain-fagged lawyers and business men, and the society women living along on the verge of nervous prostration—types of which he had often met in New York—he often wondered why they did not try the desert cure if only for a month or two.

CHAPTER VIII



"DO you know chamber-music to any extent?" asked the Deacon rather shyly, as was his wont when talking shop. The question was evoked on hearing Branscombe whistle something from a Beethoven quartet as he entered the cook-tent where he found his partner taking his mid-morning raw eggs. Branscombe nodded an affirmative, and the Deacon went on: "There's a lot in it, especially in that kind. The better class of chamber-music always appealed to me, and I gave up a great deal of time to it. But it can only be appreciated rightly when you know it by heart and can carry it through in your inner consciousness. I had abundant opportunities for hearing it at Leipzig. There was an excellent

string quartet there, as well as two or three small orchestras among the students at the Conservatory."

"They do those things better out there than here," replied Branscombe. "It was a revelation to me in Paris, the way they performed some things I was familiar with. Even a non-musician can attain to some culture in the art under such favoring conditions." The expression in his face showed that here were pleasant reminiscences.

"I came to know many of the Beethoven quartets by heart," continued the Deacon, "I heard them so much. Of course it's scholasticism, to make so much of one master on general principles, because he had reached the most commanding place in the art. While we were at it, many of us would have preferred Schubert if we had been entirely honest with ourselves, but few could have been found guilty of the heresy of saying it."

"The world's verdict though on all important matters is right," replied Branscombe. "We have to work up to the level of what we cannot at first appreciate. The reward comes later. I went to Paris to study painting, but was fortunate in falling in with musical people whose society was an education in itself. One or two were related to great musicians, and one, an old gentleman, had been a pupil of Chopin, and had known

Liszt as a young man. I came to learn or rather absorb, through them, more of this art than of painting."

"It's been a great resource to me out here on the desert," mused the Deacon, "to know so much really good music by heart. It enables me to have concerts all by myself. I am not limited to the quartets, although being simpler in construction, they are more easily carried through in the consciousness. One can develop one's imaginative faculties by exercise just as any other talent. My memory serves me well, and I often derive as much enjoyment in this way as I formerly did in the actual performance."

Branscombe remembered the rapt look that he had sometimes surprised in his partner's face on returning after an absence from the Camp.

"It's a mistake to suppose that because a great name is attached to a composition it is beyond one's comprehension," said Branscombe. "Even the last quartets of Beethoven, difficult and unintelligible as they are said to be, can be readily understood through familiarity with them, and always, in some portion, as if to tempt one, he comes down to one's level, as if to induce one afterward to rise to his. Take the Opus 131 from which I have just been whistling——"

"You like it, I can see!" interrupted his part-

ner, his face radiating pleasure. Then he took the centre of the space, as if in the midst of a group, and began whistling the theme of the Presto, in which Branscombe, entering into the spirit of the thing, joined. When they came to the conversational part they alternated. At the short impromptu, which ushers in a repetition of the opening theme, the Deacon whistled it alone, while Branscombe danced, slapping his hands and knees in a running accompaniment. The Deacon's eyes sparkled, a flush appeared on his face; he was the young student again, out for fun. "Whenever I hear that Presto," said he as he sat down to rest, "I imagine a lot of boisterous students representing the different instruments having invaded the orchestra and playing pranks. It's a lively dance-tune, and when one instrument seemingly becomes exhausted, the theme is taken in hand by another, the basses sometimes playing the melody to an accompaniment of cat-calls by the other instruments."

"And to think that this was composed in the greatest distress of mind. It illustrates how absorbing all creative work becomes in the hands of talented people," commented Branscombe.

On returning from town the following morning, he surprised his partner busy at notation and began talking to him about it.

"It's something I've had in mind for some time, but until recently have not been in the mood for it. I'm feeling better now, so I thought I would attempt it."

Branscombe was interested and asked him to tell him more about it.

"One of my instructors at Leipzig suggested the subject to me. He considered me good at fugue, and thought something might be done with it, but I'm doubtful."

"What is the subject?"

For answer, his partner showed him the title-page and synopsis.

"Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. To be cast in the form of a double fugue, the strings and wood-winds singing a lively, spirited dance-tune, in the minor, while the brasses, in undertones, with prophetic warning, tell of the morrow."

Branscombe, startled into vehemence by the *infelice* subject, uttered an exclamation of surprise and disapproval.

"You shouldn't attempt anything of that kind. Let me urge you to drop it. It will depress you. You're getting along so well now. Don't do anything to hinder it."

"I hadn't thought of it in that light," said the other mildly. "If I really became interested in

the work, it would not be depressing; I would think only of the artistic side of the question."

The situation held elements of the comic in it, in the man's absolute lack of the sense of humor, thought Branscombe savagely. Had he possessed even a glimmering perception of it, or had any idea of the fitness of things, such a subject, under existing circumstances could not have occurred to him. There was something grotesque, satyr-like about it.

"Why don't you have your wife come out?" he asked him after a pause. "You tell me she remained behind on account of holding a position as organist, but something of the same sort can be had here."

"She would like to come, of course, and it would be better for both of us," said the Deacon with some animation.

"I'll exert myself during the summer to get her a position. Changes are frequently made here I fancy, as most people go away during the hot weather. In any event, there will be no difficulty about pupils."

"She'll be glad to come," reiterated the Deacon, "especially when there's a prospect of a position. I'm writing her this afternoon and will mention it."

"And you must drop the fugue! My word for

it, it's bound to have an unfavorable effect, anything so doleful as that. If it were a jig now, I wouldn't seek to discourage you."

It came to be such a satisfaction to Branscombe to contemplate the advantages that would accrue to the campers from the well, especially as, by the exercise of his ruse to conceal his identity with the work, their gratitude would be obviated, that he began to cast about for more work of a similar nature before it was completed. When he considered that his outlay of a few hundreds might result in preventing deaths which otherwise would be likely to occur, it seemed to him that his money was purchasing more than any like amount he had ever expended.

A windy day brought him his opportunity. He recalled the recent windstorm and the plight of the campers; how the fellows either had to go into town and sit in some café all day, or batten up their tents as much as possible and remain indoors on account of the dust. It occurred to him that it would be a good plan to build a casino for them. It could be like a bungalo, ventilated from the roof and sides in such a way that the dust would be excluded while admitting an abundance of good air. It would also come in fine as a general meeting place evenings. He would have a good tight floor to the building so that it would be comfort-

able. Ample heating facilities would be provided, as well as an open fireplace. He would send for his piano and pianola, and they would have recitals when in the mood. He would have his paintings —well, no, on second thoughts, not the paintings, at least not the nudes (the elimination left rather a small residue)—the Deacon's wife would be out in the early fall and he must have due regard for her sensibilities—but the engravings could come, and the rugs and bric-a-brac. The full-length plaster casts which he had brought from Paris for his studio on the Palisades—these would give an artistic touch to the room. He would dismantle the studio, sell it, and have all the trappings sent on.

The furniture too; how well the Chippendale pieces would look here! He would fit up the casino like the old studio. He would put in some good novels too, and would subscribe for a half-dozen newspapers and some magazines.

It was with a positive elation that he went on building these air-castles. The best of it was that he at once proceeded to put foundations under them, possibly influenced thereto by the dry, stimulating atmosphere of the desert.

His thoughts recurred again to his nudes. He would sell them, all except the Aurora. He would give that to the Herr Professor in the little Black

Forest village. It was the best of the lot, for which he had paid two thousand francs years ago, and was well worthy a place even in that collection. He had not heard from him directly in several years, but he knew he was still living, as he came across frequent references to him in the papers. That would be the best disposition to make of it.

Clearly the nudes would be incongruous in this environment. The Deacon's wife was evidently as simple-minded in such matters as was the husband; at least he judged so by her letters, which the young man, in his husbandly pride in so choice a possession, sometimes handed him to read. Reading between the lines Branscombe saw that the separation was as much of an ordeal for her as for the husband, although it was not allowed to appear on the surface.

Brave little woman! he must build a house adapted to the climate so that she might be made comfortable when she came. It need not be large nor elaborate. A few large rooms on the main floor, while above there would be sleeping porches opening out from dressing-rooms—this would be all that was necessary. The walls must be built double so as to render it comfortable in summer. And there should be plenty of tiled and cemented space outside, interspersed with umbrella-trees and

Italian cedars, and he would have gardens, and date palms, and giant cacti, and a fountain!

He had some misgivings when he came to consider the difficulty there might be in keeping his own connection with the work from becoming known. He could not have explained to himself even his reluctance to appear in the rôle of a philanthropist, unless it was that his life hitherto had not been of a kind to make this character appear consistent. His ideas on the subject of philanthropists were vague and ill-defined at best, but it was obvious that this rôle would not do for him. Mlle. Fifine appeared again on his mental horizon. He imagined her ripples of laughter at any suggestion coupling him with such work.

It was characteristic of him that in recalling these phases of the old life it was generally to hold them up to scorn. The tawdry, artificial life of the Latin Quarter! How cheap and commonplace it seemed to him now, contrasted with the present, which seemed to offer some justification for living.

His attempt at maintaining his anonymity did not seem so futile to him as it would have done to a more practical man. He knew, of course, that when the casino came to be fitted up with costly furnishings, the matter would have to be accounted for, and some one would have to be placed in

charge. He consulted his attorney about it, who had ready counsel.

"I will give out that the land and building have been donated by a wealthy tourist stopping in town, who has noticed the camp, and wishes to do something for the occupants."

"That's all right, but who is to take charge of it?"

"You are," was the reply. "I will simply state that the donor has placed the business supervision of the matter in my hands, and that I have appointed you to relieve me of this part of the work, since you are living on the grounds."

It was a great day for the Deacon when the piano reached the Camp. As it was a wing, there was no thought of getting it into either tent, but Branscombe solved the difficulty by putting up two tent flies, one over the other, for protection from sun and rain, and stood the instrument on a platform beneath. When not in use it was further protected by a canvas covering fitted around it. As soon as the casino was finished—it was approaching completion—the instrument would be moved there.

Notwithstanding its rather high-sounding name, the casino was simply a one-storied building, raised several steps above the level of the ground, consisting of one large room. It had an abundance

of windows. The ceiling followed the contour of the roof-timbers, running to the centre, from which a ventilating apparatus projected over the roof. Ventilating arrangements were provided at the side walls also, which, with the open fireplace, insured pure air at all times. The lighting was done by electricity, so there was no contamination, as would have been the case had lamps been used. The interior was plastered, the roof-timbers projected between the plastering, and there was a hardwood floor.

The colossal bas-relief plaster casts, together with the furniture and other appointments, available after the dismantling of his studio made an artistic *ensemble.* By the use of tall Japanese screens an enclosure was obtained in one corner like a smaller room. Books and magazines were scattered about on small tables, couches and easy chairs abounded.

It was indeed an important feature of the Camp, this assembly-room, and was resorted to each evening by the boys in general for an hour or two, but there was an unwritten law that it was not to be used during daylight except on the rare occasions of dust-storms. On such days it was a haven to them.

Occasionally a young ranchman from the vicinity strolled in. The attorney called one evening

with Bob Hinton, noted rider and broncho buster. Most of the members had been to the steer-tying contests, where Hinton was one of the shining lights, and it was a great event to meet him personally. He was a fluent talker, was perfectly natural and unconstrained, and entertained the company famously with anecdotes of his adventures. Although only thirty-five his life would have yielded materials for an exciting border romance. Next season the Deacon's wife could organize an occasional song recital there.

While the casino was yet under way, Branscombe began drawing plans for a bathhouse and laundry. The lack of bathing facilities was a great privation in his own case, and of course equally so in that of the others. A conversation he had with Fillmore one day, as they were going into town together, led to this.

"I don't know of anything that is needed more," replied Fillmore when the subject was broached. "The fellows nearly all take cold baths each morning. Their tents are cold, they splash water about, and in general their baths are taken under difficulties. A warm room containing a few shower baths, with a hot-water attachment, so as to have the chill taken off when necessary, would be a great convenience."

"The laundry will be a room adjoining, in

the same structure," said Branscombe, who had already given the matter some consideration. "The fire required to warm the room will heat the water for bath or laundry purposes. There will be the usual appliances of a laundry: stationary tubs, a washing machine and wringer, as well as a mangle. Pedro can operate the whole." Pedro was a Mexican who had recently been employed to look after the casino, and do other camp work.

"The advantage from a hygienic point of view, of having one's own laundry cannot be overestimated," said Fillmore. "I have a theory that the bacilli are far more virulent in some individuals than in others, and there's a possibility of reinfection from wearing-apparel sent to a public laundry. In such a one as is now proposed, everything could be sterilized. I hope you will be able to influence the party contemplating this improvement to go on with it," said he gravely, as they were about to separate after some further discussion of the matter. "In its advantages to the Camp, it will be of equal importance with the casino."

Branscombe promised to do his best, and thought the matter could be managed without delay.

It *was* managed without delay, the lumber be-

ing on the grounds and the plumbing material ordered before the week was out. The building was simple, being in effect a tent-house. There were three dressing-rooms, as well as shower-baths; a wooden partition divided it from the laundry part. A small frame building was constructed near by, containing a bathtub for the women.

The casino had the effect of establishing closer relations between Branscombe and the campers. Fillmore had been the first to break the ice, having called on him even before its inception. He had made a shrewd guess that to Branscombe was to be attributed the improvements that had been made in the Camp, which was confirmed on better acquaintance by little slips which escaped him in conversation. With fine tact he humored the evident desire of the other to remain anonymous; when he had occasion to refer to the donor, it was always in the third person.

Branscombe had so far no definite design in the work he had done for the Camp. Not much money had been expended, only the immediate present having been considered. His mental outlook was broadening all the while however. When he started in on the well, he experienced such a degree of gratification in easing the situation for the people about him that he was led insensibly to make further efforts on the same lines.

His partner's history and his proximity to the campers had brought him face to face with the very real trouble that illness brings to the individual; and although these young men appeared content, often concealing pain and distress under a gay demeanor, he knew very well that the gayety was often assumed to enable them the better to bear up under the burden.

Young Latimer's mishap with the hemorrhage through which his life was still hanging in the balance, its resultant effect on Carlyle which he had witnessed on coming into his tent that evening, Alford's death—these had been in a sense object-lessons to him. Through them he came to see the tragedy that is everywhere just under the surface in life, and depths of his nature were stirred by the spectacle, of which he had hitherto remained unknowing, unconscious, which seemed to lift him for always, out of the petty and commonplace into nobler planes of thought. The blessedness as well as the necessity of the altruistic life became understandable in the light of recent experiences. It was as if conversion had followed on repentance. And conversion may be none the less possible, none the less genuine, though mourner's bench, minister, even church be eliminated.

CHAPTER IX

THAT the Deacon's health was improving under the better regimen became readily apparent to Branscombe, and it became an interesting work—this fight that he was waging for his partner's life. Although the physician held out but little encouragement, the Deacon seemed to have quick recuperative powers. He had suffered from loneliness before, and the camp work, some of it, was beyond his strength. Now that he had better diet and the unfavorable influences were eliminated, his organism quickly responded to the change.

Along with his physical improvement came also a more contented frame of mind and heightened mental power. There may have been something in the dry, ozonic atmosphere which stimulated cerebration, or it may have been the attrition of mind on mind. However it was, he became conscious of a quickening of the intellectual powers and found that he was again living to some purpose. In the keenness of his sensations, in the

quickness of his perceptions, in everything that is of the essence of life, he felt strengthened and rejuvenated.

He had been enjoined for many months from practising as it fatigued him too much. When the piano reached the Camp, it was with a veritable hunger that he came to the instrument. He had never realized until now the extent of the privation he had undergone since leaving his home. His custom, for some months before coming to Arizona, as regards his practising, had been to take a reading of his temperature and pulse before sitting down to the instrument, repeating this after having played a half-hour. If there was marked acceleration, he stopped playing for that day.

It was not merely the physical strain that had to be considered; the psychological effect also entered into the question in those days. Some works, in particular the Sonatas of Beethoven's later years, excited him so much that he was compelled to leave them alone for the most part; they drained him of his vitality. Certain of the Chopin Preludes had this effect also. Even when hearing them performed by another, they had in his weakened state set his pulses throbbing and his nerves a-quivering.

He now found, as a reward for his winter's

sojourn on the desert, that a moderate amount of playing did not fatigue him. After an hour of it, there was no abnormal change in pulse or temperature, and he got into the habit of giving little impromptu recitals each afternoon after the camp work was out of the way. The silence of the desert enabled the others to participate without leaving their quarters.

In anticipation of the arrival of the instrument he had sent for a few of his favorite compositions, those by Chopin being most in evidence. He had the temperament for Chopin and had been told already in his student days that he interpreted him admirably. Since the advent of his illness, however—since he had been called on to renounce so much, eating his heart out in idleness and solitude, far from wife and kindred—since then he had come to him with a wider comprehension. Many things became plain to him now, of which in health he had had no conception. His interior vision had become preternaturally developed in his present mode of life, in which he was thrown back and upon himself almost entirely. With nothing in his external life that appealed to him, and with more leisure than he knew well how to employ, he lived mostly in his imagination. This strongly intuitional nature, inclined to mysticism as is the case with many highly

organized people, had his moments of exaltation when at the instrument, and his performances came to mean much more to him than mere amusement. A deep, inward serenity permeated his consciousness at such times, and he seemed to advance by leaps and bounds in comprehension of the subtleties of the masters he was interpreting. In this state impressions were conveyed to him by successive flashes of enlightenment transcending any other experience of life. The Master now spoke to him with a new meaning, in a language idealized, sublimated — a language in which the neophyte was equally well versed, since both had been schooled in it by the same dread disease.

In the same ratio in which music as an art transcends all other arts in power of expression, so do the later works of Chopin seem to transcend all other creative work in their subjectivity. How these fluctuations, these varyings, betokened the alternations of hope and despair, as if recording the course of his disease! It seemed now to the disciple out on the desert, when playing again after the long interval in which he had been without an instrument, that he knew by a kind of divination with just what thought the Master had projected them. It often seemed as if he were speaking to him directly through these pages com-

municating some esoteric intelligence—as if he had had him in mind while composing the works—as if he were conscious and holding communion with him.

In thus laying bare the very innermost recesses of his spiritual life, the Master demonstrated how he was able to lose himself in these creations. In picturing his disappointment and despair, the neophyte saw as by divination how the sorrows of the other must have left him in the joy of artistic achievement. In the play of his emotions he may well have forgotten his pain. In his wonder at the quality of the art-product he was creating, he became reconciled to the price that was being exacted for it; for the spirituality, the insight which makes such achievements possible the Deacon now saw is vouchsafed only to those hovering on the border-land of the other world; and it seemed to him at times, that the price was not too great.

One other affected him profoundly, too. Mention has been made of the last three Sonatas of Beethoven. To these works, and to the opening number of the Mass in D, all of the same period of production, the Deacon always came with wonder and a kind of awe, as of a being privileged to approach, though perhaps as yet only on the threshold, a mystery ineffable, the full revelation of which he divined was reserved only for the

worthiest lives. They were to him something hallowed, set apart, not to be approached in every mood—to be reserved for his best moments.

This subjectivity—this intense interiority exhibited in the later works of Beethoven as well as of Chopin, which impresses the beholder as of a life-tragedy transpiring before his very eyes—which it indeed is—how it appealed to him! how it stood out in this environment! The desert supplied a unique setting for it and its significance was heightened thereby. In the vastness and stillness and isolation from counter influences which the desert affords, this art-work seemed the one pregnant point in the universe.

The artistic possibilities in Branscombe responded to the master-performances of his partner and strengthened the bond between them. In his circle in Paris there had been a Chopin cult; he was familiar with the Preludes and much of the other work, but he realized that he had never really appreciated them until now. The technique had been correct enough; it was in the interpretation that the difference lay,—in that, and yes! in himself too, in his own larger receptivity. It was to him an initiation into a new world of thought—this revelation of the music of the Polish master which took place through his partner's instrumentality. He recognized it as yet another out-



It was an initiation into a new world of thought—this revelation of the music of the Polish master which took place through his partner's instrumentality.

come of the worthier life he was living—this heightened sensibility toward such things.

On one occasion the Deacon began his afternoon performance with a Chopin Prelude, the sadness of which, ending in despair, he had found so depressing that he had kept away from it hitherto. He continued with others of the same class, and Branscombe, sitting in his tent near by, listened spellbound. From the beginning, as the opening chords were struck, his attention was arrested by something unusual in the performance. He had often heard the Prelude performed in Paris, but never had such a tragic significance been given it as now.

How like life it was, even in its brevity, he thought. And these buoyant tone-figures introduced in the midst of the tragedy, like the sudden irresistible leap of the fancy to flights of joy, irradiating for the moment the gray background with their note of cheer, then quickly called back again to the somber things, the painful things—how like life this! And all the while in undertones the theme with varying harmony and measured rhythm forging ahead like the tread of many feet marching on to the fulfillment of some inexorable destiny!

As the brief recital approached its end, it seemed to Branscombe as if he were looking into

his partner's soul, and he became aware that the other had been speaking to him through his art, conveying his thoughts through this most subtle medium, giving him an epitome of his life, with all its protest against fate. The pent-up fury, the bitterness that he had never expressed in words, the disappointment over thwarted ambitions, the impotent rage when he reflected that the sacrifice was unnecessary and might have been warded off —all the tragedy of his life had been depicted in this half-hour's performance, causing Branscombe to be profoundly affected by it, and leading him to resolve anew to do all that was possible to aid in his restoration to health.

The psychology of suffering, its adequate portrayal—perhaps this is the highest and truest in all art, demanding the best from human endeavor at every stage of the effort from its incipiency in the artist's mind to its perception by the beholder. The spiritual essence that exists in every great art-work,—evidence of the divine intervention in human affairs, is always most apparent here, its purpose and message—self-illumination. Much of the Chopin music and many of the creations of Beethoven's later years are in this class, *intime,* soul-searching, a veritable language of sorrow. Only the soul which has suffered is capable of this kind of portrayal—only such a one is qualified to

receive its message. Born in pain, in a very travail of anguish, these works tell their story fully in some mystical way only to such as have suffered equally with the creator of them; they pass over the heads of others, speaking to them merely through their artifice.

We would look in vain for a message of this kind in the large musical forms—those intended for stage representation—the Opera, or even the Symphony or Oratorio. Even in such portions of them in which the effect sought for is the portrayal of sorrow, it falls wide of the mark as compared with the other; it exhibits only a dramatic sorrow, it is not *intime*; it makes no personal appeal as in the case of the other, which speaks directly to the individual need. The one is like oratory; the other, the heartfelt sympathy of the friend.

The message speaks strongly to men like Branscombe, who, while capable of the higher life have chosen the lower of set purpose and have been brought to the point where they see their mistake. To such, who have been made to suffer by their folly, who, when their eyes have been opened to a realization of it have bowed their necks to the yoke, and in atoning are transformed—to these regenerate ones is the artist's message fully revealed. To the soul that has once seen itself face

to face, accepting humbly its penance, acquiescing in it, making no plea, desiring only reinstatement —to such a one is given the spiritual essence of works of this nature. He is partaker with the artist in the Mystery, participant in the miracle enacted.

CHAPTER X

"ANY of you fellows heard anything regarding Blakeslee?" asked a visitor at the Camp one morning. He lived in town, and had known White and Fillmore the previous year. He came to the Camp periodically, and soon became acquainted with the party.

"Who's Blakeslee?" asked Farrell, of the "Wells-Fargo outfit."

"A lunger who came here last year with a full-dress outfit. Fine fellow; good as they make 'em, but he didn't know what he was up against or he would have cut that out. He and White were partners all last summer in Prescott."

"Your turn, White," said another, Bruce McSorley by name. He was a Scotchman, but on account of his freckles and auburn hair had been dubbed "Micky." This sobriquet, along with his physiological peculiarities, lent him the air of an Irishman, which part he tried his best to live up to. "Give us the history of the society man on the desert."

"Haven't seen him in a long while," replied

White, "not since the middle of December. He lives only a few miles from here too, but I haven't got to it, haven't felt like it, and that's a fact. I didn't like to think of his living alone on the desert and urged him the last time I was there to move his outfit to our camping place here, but I couldn't prevail on him. He looked pretty homesick too, but wouldn't admit it."

"Let's go and see him this afternoon," proposed Fillmore. "I liked him first-rate, what I saw of him. I've nothing on for this afternoon, and would like to take a ride."

"All right, Filly," assented White. "It'll cheer him up, and we may be able to persuade him to move his tent here. Any one would get homesick living all alone that way. The little he earns packing oranges isn't worth while. He's not fit to work anyway."

"I saw him in town once last winter," volunteered another. "He was togged up to go to some society affair. I told him then to cut it out."

"I wish he would come here," reiterated White. "The poor fellow will die of loneliness there. He works a couple of hours, then goes back to his tent and gets a little to eat. In the afternoon it's the same. Toward evening he hikes back to his tent, cooks a little, eats all alone. After he washes

his dishes he reads an hour or two, then goes to bed. Sometimes he doesn't see more than one or two persons all day."

The talk then drifted to other things, but in the afternoon, when the two were jogging along in the old buggy, it was resumed.

"What was Blakeslee's occupation back East?"

"Line draughtsman in a photo-engraving house," replied White sententiously. "He had a sister depending on him, but she supports herself now."

"He sure liked society," remarked Fillmore, occasionally adopting the Western phraseology. "A good-looking fellow like him has things made pleasant for him, you bet, when he's out in company."

White went on with his narrative. "He has some wealthy relatives, an uncle and cousins, in the East. I've sometimes thought one of the cousins was a sweetheart, but have no reason for thinking so. He was always reticent. Anyhow, letters frequently passed between them, and sometimes he seemed quite cast down after receiving one. He used to tell me a little about them, how they were gay, fashionable people, quite wealthy, but living beyond their means. It was the very antithesis of his present life, and the letters may

have called up the former one so vividly as to make him homesick."

Their way led them a mile or two along rows of cottonwoods on the edge of alfalfa fields. Every little while a bungalow, embowered in China trees with occasional palms interspersed, hove into sight. Further on, ranch and desert alternated, and the road at times took a short cut across a stretch of desert. There was an intensely blue sky overhead, brilliant sunshine bathed the land; on every side the horizon was bounded by mountains. White continued: "The Copelands, the relatives of whom I have been speaking, used to send him newspapers containing items about themselves marked in blue pencil. The items always referred to dinner parties given by them, or to society events at which they figured as guests. I sometimes thought that in exploiting their own more fortunate condition, the contrast presented thereto by their relative's deprivations, was not among the least of their motives in remembering him."

"There are persons who have brought selfishness to a fine art. Dilettante in everything else, they become adepts in this."

A jack-rabbit, caught napping, ran from almost under the horse's feet, fleeing in graceful leaps and bounds from the threatened danger. A stac-

cato whistle from White emphasized the danger and accelerated his speed. When out of gunshot, he came to a halt on a little mound and looked back at them. After a while White went on with his story.

"Last Christmas they sent him a diamond scarfpin and an edition de luxe of Browning."

Fillmore laughed.

"When I told the fellows in the Camp about it, Micky grinned. 'I catch on to the scarfpin all right, but I don't savvy the other. You'll have to come down to plain United States with me,' he said.

"They invited him to their house a good deal, I fancy," went on White. "He's a fine presentable fellow who would do credit to any gathering. But I don't think they know much about his present circumstances."

"Or care either," supplemented Fillmore.

"These people living on the edge of the highest society, lacking the great wealth which would give them the assured position they covet, having no motive in life, or if there is one, it consists in appearing rather than being—are not at all to be envied. Give me health, and I wouldn't exchange with any of them," said White with conviction.

"I'd rather be a cowboy, or as one of these ranchers," said Fillmore, "but it's all a matter

of environment, or rather, it's the way you start in. Let your cowboy or ranchman go to New York to live, and it wouldn't be long before the city would get in its work on him. He would conform to its requirements just as the others do."

"Never!" cried White. "I can't imagine a cowboy wearing cuffs on his pants or a plug hat!"

Fillmore laughed at the fancy. "What do you suppose his old partners would do to him if they ever caught him wearing a plug hat?"

"Splash it full of lead, I suppose, and yet, the carved leather bands they wear on their own hats are quite as unnecessary and uncalled for."

"The next improvement in order in our Camp is a dining-room and kitchen. I believe this will come to pass next fall. Think of Alford lying there in his tent, being cared for by other sick people!"

"That's better than to be alone, however, as Blakeslee is," said White, whose apprehensions seemed to gather force the nearer he approached his friend. "We must tell him about these changes and improvements to our Camp. It will be an added inducement in getting him to come to us. I'll make him a proposition to the effect that if he'll come to us for the balance of the winter, I'll spend the summer with him wherever he will care to go."

"If the dining-room and kitchen are installed, of which there is but little doubt in my mind, the Camp will become a permanent thing," communicated Fillmore. "I've heard nothing to that effect, but this is the logical outcome of what has already been done. Then it will grow. There's the nucleus of a fine sociological experiment here. I shall stay right on, and will volunteer my services. Although I've had no practice, my illness having coming on just after graduation, I can get along with most of the work all right. For that matter, arrangements can be made with a doctor from town to visit the Camp periodically for the first year."

He paused, and when White had given his assent to the proposition, continued:

"There should be daily examinations of pulse and temperature so as to combat every symptom as it arises. When a man has a temperature, even if one degree above the normal, he should keep very quiet. He'd best keep to his bed if possible, until it gets back to normal. If it's subnormal, as is sometimes the case, a moderate amount of exercise is helpful, but this should be carefully watched so as not to overdo it. The body-weight and chest measurement of each should also be taken periodically and records kept of each individual. By frequent examinations, complica-

tions are often avoided, or at least more easily met. Take diabetes for instance, which is an occasional complication of tuberculosis and frequently fatal. A tendency in that direction can sometimes be discovered in time to be controlled by suitable diet. In any event, the condition can be ameliorated when discovered early, and the life may thus be prolonged."

"You speak about suitable diet," replied White. "If alimentation, or rather superalimentation, plays such an important part in fighting the disease, and that's a pretty well-established fact, I should think an expert in dietetics would be a most valuable man around a health camp. Have you gone into that any?"

"In a general way, yes, but only on my own account. I'll get into communication with my old professor in Theory and Practice, and have him outline a course of reading for me on the subject. They seem to put their whole reliance here on climate, but good diet is really of more importance. As has been well said, poor climate with good food is better than a good climate and poor food. Good care throughout is more important than climate. Good care and good climate combined, as in a good health camp, is of course best."

"The fellow that wins out in this disease," said White, "is the one who can study his own case

intelligently so as to coöperate with his physician. I long ago took up this question of diet, and I think that explains to a great extent why I am getting along so well. Of course the information I've gained on the subject is only relative and approximate. No doubt a fuller knowledge would secure better results. I avoid sweets in general, and starches as much as possible. I masticate my food thoroughly so as to have it well salivated, and try to get the right proportion of proteids and fruits. And I'm careful not to eat too much at any one meal."

"A frequent complaint of the invalids hereabouts," declared Fillmore, "is that they have a weak stomach. Digestion and assimilation are generally poor in this disease, and in many cases the trouble has been aggravated by medicines. One or two of the invalids in our Camp were almost all in when they came, owing to the creosote they had taken. Many abuse their stomachs systematically. When I see the indigestible stuff most invalids eat—starches, hot breads, pastry—it always seems to me, knowing as I do the bad after-effects, like attempting suicide."

"In the ideal health camp there would be a dietitian who would make out the menu for each meal," replied White. "Only such food as is most easily digested would be offered, and it would

be served attractively. There are half a dozen ways of serving raw eggs palatably. I know it is advised always to eat them just as they come from the shell, but some people just can't do it. It's revolting to them, especially at first. In such a case it's better to beat them and combine them with other things; and so it would be with everything else on the list. It could be managed, too, that the meals be eaten slowly. An hour to a dinner or supper would not be too much. It is a common matter to take an hour or more at dinner at hotels."

"A hospital with a trained nurse in charge, is also one of the essentials of a health camp," offered Fillmore. "This was demonstrated at the time that young Latimer was stricken with the hemorrhage, and Alford sick abed at the same time. It need be nothing pretentious. A building like the casino, with two or three small rooms off it—an operating room, a nurse's room, and a small laboratory—would be sufficient. Hemorrhagic cases in particular would do much better in a hospital ward where a nurse could always be at hand. This applies also to temperature cases. The tedium of lying in bed would be greatly obviated in a ward where there were a number of people."

"What are young Latimer's chances for re-

covery? Does he make a good patient? In passing his tent yesterday afternoon, I heard him whistling softly to himself, and concluded that it was about time for him to be getting impatient; he's stood it pretty well so far, but time must hang heavily on his hands, so I got a volume of Bret Harte and read Christmas at Sandy Bar to him. He had been over this ground with his father and Carlyle, on trips to the Yosemite Valley, and he described to me the long hill over which Dick Bullen rode that Christmas eve on his way to Sandy Bar for the toys. They camped over night once in a cluster of pines just outside Sandy Bar, and while there, his father told them the story."

"He's sure getting impatient," replied Fillmore. "Carlyle'll have his hands full pretty soon, keeping him in bed. He ought to lie still for some weeks longer. If some of the girls that used to come here, would call on him occasionally, he'd be more tractable. He has a chance for pulling through if he does the right thing, but such an occurrence sets back recovery at least a year. This may teach him to be more careful."

"Oh, he'll be careful enough now, for a while! Carlyle'll see to that. The time of greatest danger for the consumptive is when he is recovering. When he begins to feel well, he thinks he is well,

and then he wants to put the matter to the test. He begins with small excesses, and if no harm results, he increases them. The first thing he knows he's down again. Eternal vigilance is the price of health."

"Carlyle'll keep him straight if any one can."

"Yes, but I don't envy him his job," rejoined White.

"Carlyle seems to want to force the issue and keep him alive, even against fate. Percy is not the kind to take care of himself. If he does pull through, it will be because Carlyle wants to keep him bad enough to be willing to make sacrifices to that end. Logically, it's young Latimer's fate to die, since he hasn't the faculty of taking care of himself," said Fillmore.

"In a world like this, though, few could be found willing to make the sacrifice."

"It's literally a fight with death on Carlyle's part. He seems to want to keep him alive at any cost."

They passed a tent, the only one in sight. A ranch-house lay an eighth of a mile distant, across two fields fenced with barbed wire. A solitary woman, a health-seeker from the East, was encamped here by the roadside. She got her water from an irrigating ditch near by, and the stage brought her her supplies and mail. The friends

in passing heaved a silent prayer, or what was equivalent to it, for her recovery and restoration to home and kindred.

White mused on the difficulties by which some people are surrounded, and, thinking thus, a picture of this woman's plight rose before his mental vision. What must have been her state of mind previously, to render this mode of life endurable? After a while he spoke:

"The unkindness that we human beings permit ourselves toward one another, is the most unaccountable thing in this paradoxical world. How much better the situation for each in a Camp like ours even, and it can hardly be called a camp as yet it is such an embryonic affair. Yet this woman would be much better off there, than living here all alone."

"She probably did not know what to do, and after worrying herself half sick, some ranchman or drayman may have located her. I've heard of such cases," said Fillmore.

A road-runner directly in front diverted their attention from the subject in hand. They watched him speeding along, wings, tail and feet working in conjunction as if created solely for the purpose of getting swiftly over the ground.

"Another advantage of an organized camp—a great one, is the discipline that can be incul-

cated," he continued. "This will settle the question of spitting about, which some still practice in our Camp. They won't do it when they find that it will mean dismissal. Its importance can be insisted on so strongly as to lead any one to report a violation of it, as is the case in the sanatoriums. When people once fully comprehend the fact in all its significance, that the disease is perpetuated only through the sputum, and that the sick are in danger of reinfection by it, each one will feel like doing police service in the matter."

Their way led them for another mile through a sandy road bordered by greasewood, which shut in their view. When their destination finally emerged into view, on turning a corner, White was startled to find that Blakeslee's tent was nowhere to be seen. He knew the exact location where it had been pitched; its removal seemed ominous; he felt a sudden constriction in the throat. He knew that he had not acted right toward his old partner. He had conditionally agreed to come out to the desert with him when the subject was first broached, but had afterward changed his mind, fearing the loneliness that must ensue from living so far from others. He had endeavored to dissuade Blakeslee from going also, but without avail, and he felt like a delinquent thereafter whenever he thought of his part in the

affair. He had justified himself by saying that both were equally at fault, if there was any fault; that Blakeslee should not have persisted in going out there alone after he (White) had decided not to accompany him; but his arguments had not been convincing. The disappearance of the tent caused these misgivings to rise again with renewed force. A presentiment of coming trouble rose up before him; he drove on to the ranch-house in a tumult, his heart knocking against his ribs.

When he found the ranchman, he asked a question and made a statement all in one.

"I see Blakeslee has moved. Where's he gone to?"

The ranchman looked at him, but did not immediately answer. After a little, he said:

"Won't you come in? Come in and sit down."

The friends got out of the buggy, and sat on the steps of the house. The man's silence and deliberation seemed like a portent.

"You were a friend of his I think? I've seen you here."

White nodded. "Where's he gone to?" His voice was husky, his tongue parched.

"He died a week ago. He had a set-back and did not come to the packing house one day, so I went to his tent. He located it at a distance from the house so as to be away from irrigated land.

I found him in bed with a high temperature. I got a friend to help nurse him, and also sent for a doctor, but he died the next day. I looked over his letters so as to get the address of his relatives. Here is one signed 'Uncle James,' and there are others from his cousins."

White recognized the handwriting on the envelopes. Blakeslee's relatives always wrote out his full name in addressing him, Mr. Sandford Pinkerton Blakeslee. He mechanically removed one from its cover. It was from the cousin and read as follows:

DEAR SANDY:

Why don't you hurry and get well, you bad boy! You don't know what an amount of enjoyment you are depriving me of by your wilfulness. There never was such a waltzer as you, at least there never has been one who could keep step with me as you can. We have all missed you so much this winter even more than last. I have gone out a good deal more this winter than ever before, and am so used up that we have just got to go to Palm Beach to recuperate. I have two functions on for this evening, and here it is already six, and I am still in walking costume. You'll excuse me from writing any more, won't you, dear boy?

With oceans of cousinly love,

Yours,

KITTY.

P. S.—Papa says if I don't call a halt, I may have to go to Arizona too. Fancy me in a tent with a maid!

He read another from Cousin Walter:

TIMISKAMING, Ontario.

DEAR SANDFORD:

I wish you might be with us here in the depths of a Canadian winter. Bainbridge and Winslow are with me, and you would have filled up the party nicely. It's great sport. I spend hours on snow-shoes, and come into Camp with a four-story appetite. But snow-shoeing requires more strength than you could probably muster. I intended sending you some novels, but was so busy getting ready for the trip, that it slipped my mind. I trust Kitty, who is starting for Palm Beach, will have sent them.

Sorry, old boy, that you have to be sick. I suppose you're lonely too. Hurry up and get well. We want you back.

Then followed a description of a bachelor supper given by him at Sherry's, the cost of which would have defrayed Blakeslee's expenses in Arizona for the past six months.

"Your name is White, I believe," offered their host. "I think you were here with Blakeslee when he first came."

On White answering in the affirmative, he produced a water-color of the mountain which had evidently been done by Blakeslee. On the back had been scribbled, "For White."

"No man ought to live alone this way," said White, when they were again in the buggy, as they

drove by the place where Blakeslee had camped. "They eat out their hearts in loneliness and homesickness. Had Blakeslee lived in a Camp like ours, he would have had a good chance for recovery."

The afternoon was wearing to its close. The shadow of the mountain lay across their path. It began to grow chill.

When they reached Camp again, the drive thither having been made almost in silence, the others, who knew where they had been, made no inquiries in regard to Blakeslee. They divined the truth from the reticence of White and Fillmore, and the subject was not alluded to in the Camp.

CHAPTER XI

"HOW'S your book getting on, White?"

"I'm only in the fourth Chapter, and have come to a standstill."

"How's that? I thought you'd have it most done by this time."

The first speaker was a friend of White's whom he had known in boyhood. Later his family had moved to another city, and White had not seen him again until they met in Arizona. His name was Robert Fullerton. He was the senior by several years, White's precocity having led him generally to associate with boys older than himself. He had come to the territory some years previously, and was engaged in mining. He lived at a camp some thirty miles in the interior, making periodic visits to town and usually looked up White on these occasions. They chanced to meet that morning, and Fullerton, intending to stay a day or two in town had agreed to return to the Camp with White for the day. They were walking about town now seeing the sights, which never failed to interest the miner.

"What's the trouble?" Miners are usually

laconic. They spend so much of their time alone that speech, even when they have the opportunity of exercising it, seems something too precious to be used lightly. They make good listeners. Fullerton enjoyed these confabs, but not more so than White, to whom an audience was one of the essentials of life. "What's the trouble?"

"I don't know whether to kill the villain, really one of my strongest characters, or let him live and make a hero out of him. He's good stuff all right but he won't do for the part he's cast for."

"It's the low-down town-sharp you described when telling me about the book the last time I saw you, isn't it? He was too no-account to cast a shadow you said. You were going to lam him most generous."

Fullerton, who had read a great deal and was a man of some education (there were several college men in his Camp) was wont to adopt the picturesque style of language usually put into the mouths of cow-boys and miners in the books on the Southwest he met with, when talking to Eastern people. It pleased them, they evidently expected it, and he took pleasure in the thought that he was able thus to contribute to their enjoyment. He liked too, to exercise his wits in this way; it showed versatility. In his thoughts, and out at the Camp among his fellows, the language seemed

no different from that in use everywhere in the East. He learned from his books on the West how to make his speech lurid, so as to come up to the expectations that he felt were formed of him by the tourists and invalids. His sense of humor was a well-developed one, although not readily apparent to others at the beginning. That White was often in doubt whether or not to take him seriously for the time being, will indicate how well he performed his self-imposed task.

"You were drawing the character from life?"

White nodded an affirmative. "The story was to have been written around some one I know, and was in fact, inspired by him. He was to have been a bigamist," went on White, warming up to his theme, "and his position becoming untenable, was to rob his grandmother of her all, fasten the crime on one of the family, forge some checks, and flee to Arizona hiding in a lunger's camp, where he was to pretend to be an invalid."

"And you, as the hero, were going to show him up some?"

White gave a qualified assent to this proposition. "He was a good, strong character. I'll have to try and change it to a Mexican bandit story," continued White, looking toward the South, where the mountains of Mexico lay bathed in sunshine.

"He was sure an out and outer. But why can't you go on with it? You've been mistaken in his play?"

"He's come to the end of his usefulness as a villain," replied White with simulated plaintiveness. "I can't do anything with him on this line. He's disappointed me. He just won't do."

"These city scouts sometimes are all right, but you've got to watch 'em on the start until you know their play. I've never had much to do with them myself, but some of 'em seem decent enough chaps. There was one here all last winter, a lunger, dealing faro. Never let his sister back East know he was sick even; he was sending her money to live on and didn't want her to worry. She got some money ahead and toward spring, came out here to surprise him with a visit. She hadn't seen him since he left for California, three years before."

"He was surprised, I'll bet!"

"Both of 'em were; and the worst of it was he was about all in when she got here. The close confinement and bad air had been telling on him, and he only lived a few weeks longer. He had a life insurance of a thousand or two which he left her. When he received her telegram asking him to meet her on arrival of the train, he gave up his job, so as to prevent her learning of

the work he was doing, and made arrangements to leave town with her the same day, saying the doctor had advised a change of climate. He took her to Tucson where he wasn't known. He died there."

A group of Indians slouched along by them, the bucks wearing their hair in long braids down their backs, the squaws smartened with bits of bright color on their faces arranged in geometrical lines on the cheek, from the mouth half-way to the ear. The Arizona squaw doesn't spend much money on clothes, but when it comes to paint, she understands its decorative value as much as does her civilized sister, however differently she applies it. White stooped to pat an urchin, but the child, divining his intention, slid adroitly to the other side out of reach, with the instinct of the wild thing to fight shy of man.

"Going back East this summer? You haven't been East since you first came here, have you? Seems to me you don't go much on the mother, home and heaven question."

"No," responded White, "I'm going to try to stand it here again this summer."

"It's hotter than Tophet down here in the valley in July and August. Better go up to Prescott again." Fullerton spoke from an extended experience.

"I'd like to go to California," said White wistfully, "but it is so far. You can camp there in summer much better than here, as there's no rain or dew to contend with. It's cooler too. California's the lunger's paradise in summer."

Fullerton was immediately interested. "That's so. California would be the place. The Ojai Valley say, somewhere near Nordhoff. I camped there for a few weeks one summer."

"Rather too near the coast for me," objected White. "Or for any invalid for that matter. The fogs come in from the ocean and make it damp. Dry air's the thing."

"I've prospected some over the Mojave desert but you might as well stay here as to go there. It's sure hot on the Mojave."

"The Santa Clara Valley, or even the San Joaquin Valley, would be best," remarked White. "It may be hot right in the middle of the day there, but it's pleasant enough at all other times. And the nights are a delight."

They were walking along the main street. As they passed a department store Fullerton paused and said:

"I've got to get something here. If you've anything else to attend to, I'll meet you somewhere."

White, noticing Fullerton's evident desire to

get rid of him, assured him that he had attended to all his matters before meeting him, that he was in no hurry, and that he could give him all his time for the rest of the day if need be. So they entered the store together.

A round-up of the articles required was effected by the aid of the floor-walker, but they were not such as miners usually take with them into the desert. Germantown wool, cretonne, sewing-silk in two colors to match samples—"What in thunder," thought White, "can he want with this gear?" He felt that he was on the eve of an interesting disclosure. When they came out, the miner heaved a sigh of relief, wiped the perspiration from a clammy brow and proceeded to explain.

"Berkely's sister is at the Camp. You met him once in town here with me."

White nodded. Then he said interrogatively, "Lungs?"

"Yes. She was in a bad way, and had to come out at once as soon as she was able to travel. She had an attack of pneumonia."

"But she's the only woman in the Camp, isn't she? How many men are there?"

"About a dozen," he replied, answering the easiest question first. "She *was* the only woman in the Camp when she came, and we had to ship

one in order to be able to say that much even; but there are several there now, and they're all right too."

"The plot thickens," said White. "Tell me about it."

"Well, it was this way. One of the boys, Middleton, had a woman in his cabin that he wasn't married to. As soon as we heard that Miss Berkely was coming out, we told him that she would have to vamose, get absent, hit the trail back."

"Wasn't that the 'Gazelle' you told me about once?"

"The same. She was a Mexican, but that was her name when Middleton got her. It must have been ladled out to her by an earlier admirer," said Fullerton, lapsing into facetiousness. "She's some too stout now to fit the part. It wasn't any of our concern before, but when we knew that a sure good woman was coming to the Camp, we made things plain to him right away, you bet!"

"Didn't he put up a kick?"

"Kick? No! he didn't kick, not a little bit. He knew what he was up against. Kicking would have helped him none. He knew the temper of the boys. You see they were all in love with Berkely's sister, long before we knew she was coming, just from seeing her picture. We had

got into the habit of going into his tent evenings to pass the time, slinging yarns, the boys called it. There were three photos of her, each different. We never could tell which we liked best."

In the interest which the subject evoked, he was becoming loquacious. It was as if the femininity which had of late come into his life had acted as a lubricant to his speech.

"Middleton didn't kick," continued Fullerton, "but he tried to compromise—asked us if it would be all right if he'd marry the woman, but we told him No! by —— fifty marriages wouldn't make her fit to associate with Miss Berkely. We wouldn't stand for it no how."

"And then?"

"Then he said as long as the boys were going to make a Sunday-school out of the Camp, they had better buy his shares and he would get out. He acted white by his Gazelle all right; he's a sure man all through."

"Which they did, I suppose?"

"You bet! And it didn't take them long to make up their minds either. We made him a good offer, which he promptly accepted. It took a few days to raise the money, after which he and the Gazelle hit the trail for town. When he left, he said that he would like to do something for the Camp in recognition of the many pleasant hours

he had spent there, and that if we would agree to set up a gospel-shop he would leave his tent and furniture as a home for the sky-scout. He has written several times since, offering suggestions for the 'work' as he calls it."

Fullerton began fumbling in his pockets and finally produced a letter which he handed to his friend. It was as follows:

CANANEA, Feb. 12th, 19—

To ROBT. FULLERTON, ESQ.,
Bowlegs Mine, Arizona.

FRIEND FULLERTON: I am somewhat disappointed, but not surprised, that the friendly interest I take in Old Camp Bowlegs, the scene of my early struggles, should be so little appreciated. I shall not let this discourage me however. When I get a new idea, I'll write you about it, even though I get no response. In my last letter I asked you to get a kodak and send me some pictures of the Camp as it now appears. How's the Sunday-school getting along? If started, you can draw on me for $100 to boost it along.

Always your friend and well-wisher,
M.

"It's a cooperative company, isn't it?" was White's next remark.

"In a measure, yes," was the reply. "Although all the members of the Camp are not stockholders, each shares to some extent in the profits above the wages paid. Should one be dissatisfied and want to leave, as in the case of Mid-

dleton, the others buy him out. The Camp would forge ahead if we'd take in outside capital to develop it, but we're doing well enough as it is."

"Didn't you say there were other women in the Camp?"

"Yes. It seemed to us that it would be playing it pretty low-down mean on a fine girl like Miss Berkely to expect her to live in a miner's Camp thirty miles from town and be the only woman there, so we held a meeting after we got Middleton's matter off our hands to see what could be done."

White looked his approval.

"You see, Berkely was not there to see our play, so we were free to act as we saw fit. As soon as he got his sister's letter he telegraphed her to start at once, and he would meet her in Chicago. From the time he left, all work on the mine was stopped until we got things rounded up for her arrival."

"He's a civil engineer, isn't he?"

"Yes, and he's done more for the Camp than any one there. He might have owned it all, instead of making it cooperative if he had wanted to play a smart game."

White knew the circumstances of the inception of the Bowlegs mine. Fullerton had told him the story on a previous occasion; how two others be-

sides Berkely and himself had been working at the Tomcat mine on wages; how they had made several prospecting trips by ones and twos; how the four had from the start decided to pool their issues, saying this would be the squarest way to play the game; how finally two were maintained in the field prospecting, alternating with two that remained at work, the wages of the two who worked, having been sufficient to keep the four. He remembered too, the circumstances of the strike; how just before, meeting with no success, they had practically dissolved the pool, against Berkely's wishes, upon which he had decided to go back East. He remembered the particularity with which Fullerton had told him how Berkely, while packing, had bethought him of a spot that had on a previous prospecting trip looked promising, but had been passed over with a cursory examination, his partner having seen something elsewhere that seemed better. On leaving, he had resolved to come again and look over the ground more thoroughly, but had not done so; and this unkept resolution had recurred to him while packing his trunk. He felt impelled to give the place the "try" that was coming to it, Fullerton had said, and, obeying an irresistible impulse, had dropped his packing and started out on the desert alone with only his pack mule and an Indian boy.

Of his find, of how he at once went through the legal formalities which made him sole owner, of how, on his return to Camp, he brought with him the papers making the three others equal partners with him in the mine, the same as if the pool had not been dissolved, saying there would be enough for all—of this Fullerton had also spoken.

"You haven't told me yet about the other women. How did you manage that?"

"I'm coming to it. When I raised the question about how to get any respectable women to come to the Camp it was a poser you bet. We felt that we were up against it for sure this time.

"'Ain't any of you fellows got sisters that could be induced to come out?' said I after we had been discussing the matter a full half-hour. 'We could let them share equally in the profits.' I waited for a response but it wasn't forthcoming. After a while Dick Wales spoke up. You don't know Dick, do you?"

White shook his head.

"He's a Columbia man. He came here for his health a year or two after graduating. He had been in a sanatorium in the East, and came here to hustle the case along. That's Dick all through. He's so well cured now that he sometimes forgets he ever was a lunger. He could live in the East if he wanted to, but he has a

good thing in the mine, and, anyway, he likes the life."

"And Dick had ready counsel, I suppose," offered White.

"Not at first. He said it was a proposition that he wouldn't want to put to *his* sister, she not being an idiot; that no woman would be willing to get very far from a department store, and that while his sister always signed her letters 'Yours lovingly,' or 'Yours affectionately,' he wouldn't test her love and affection to such an extent as to ask her to come to a camp like Bowlegs, thirty miles from anywhere. The proposition didn't meet with much favor from any quarter, and we didn't know what to do. Then Dick took the floor in parliamentary style. He likes his little joke, and somehow, I began to feel uncomfortable as soon as he got up. 'Why can't some of you fellows marry?' was his remark. Then he looked straight at me and said: 'I propose that our honorable Chairman, who is older and wiser than most of us here, and who started the discussion in the first place, set us an example and be the first to put his head in the noose.'"

"People don't marry out of hand this way," said Fullerton retrospectively. "It's a proposition that both sides ought to consider well first."

"That's so," murmured White.

Fullerton continued: "There was harder bucking and more of it, more rearing and pawing on the marrying proposition than on the first one. After it had lasted a while, Dick began to get sensible. 'There are many women,' he said, 'that come here for their health in the same way that Berkely's sister is coming. You can see them camping all alone along the roadsides near town. I suppose many of them are scant of money, too. We might get a few of them to come out here and live in the Camp. They'd probably be glad of the opportunity. Berkely is well known in town, and his sister's presence in Camp will make it all right for the others. They can stay here free of charge, and we can get a Chinaman to cook for them. I know of a young doctor too who would come under the circumstances.'"

"Compared with the other proposition, this one of Dick's was a stroke of genius," commended White. "There are lots of women that would be glad of the chance. Did you have everything in good shape when Berkely came with his sister?"

"He left her in town with some friends and came alone. He didn't know anything about what we had done, and thought he had better trail on ahead and reconnoitre."

"He was surprised, I bet," said White, thinking that he would like to go there himself on a

visit. His friend had several times asked him to visit the Camp, but heretofore White had excused himself on the ground of the hardship of the trip.

"You can bet he was surprised. We had changed the Camp so that he didn't know it. We held all the cards and did the thing up right! We had put up five new tent-houses in a group, near Berkely's tent. One of these is used as a kitchen. The dining-room is out of doors, with a fly overhead for protection from the sun. Dick had gone into town, and brought the young doctor along with him. He is a lunger himself and knew all the ropes. The tent-houses for the ladies are furnished with everything that a sure enough lady would want, even to rocking-chairs and strips of carpet before the beds. We bought china dishes for them to eat out of, and silver spoons and forks, and there are books and magazines a-plenty. Dick attended to it mostly, and he did it up slick, you bet! He's a hustler from way back."

"Then they all came out together?"

"No, Berkely went back to town the next day. He and his sister called on the ladies who had arranged to come. They were not quite ready to go yet, however, and as Berkely was needed at the mine, he returned the following day, taking

his sister with him. The others came on a few days later with the physician. They are feeling so well now that they are doing some work. Two of them are occupying one tent, and the one that was vacated is fitted up with a cook-stove and some utensils, and they make desserts for the boys. Say! they make apple pie and doughnuts like they do in New England! If you'd eaten Chinaman's apple pie for eight years as I have, you'd know what that means. That apple pie and those doughnuts alone more than compensate us for the added expense of the Camp. The boys have started a little garden and have lettuce and radishes growing. We're living high!"

"We'll come out and visit you before we break Camp," said White. "We'll bring our blankets and sleep on the hay."

CHAPTER XII

FOLLOWING close on Fullerton's visit, White and Fillmore started early one morning in a mountain wagon drawn by a team of bronchos, to pay their proposed visit to Camp Bowlegs.

The season was well advanced. The yearly celebration of Nature had come round again. It was late in May, and in May this land blossoms as the rose. A pageantry of flowers, a very riot of blossoming, accompanied the travelers on their way, as if they had been making a royal progress. The very ditches along the roadsides, decked out in masses of blooms, proclaimed the exuberance of Nature. In the irrigated fields the upspringing alfalfa was in blossom and ready to cut. Stands of bees with hives numbering into the hundreds were to be seen here and there, under the shade of the cottonwoods, on the edges of fields convenient to the alfalfa blossoms.

"How did they come to give the Camp such a name as 'Bowlegs'?" asked Fillmore.

"Berkely discovered the mine and named it

after one of his partners," was the reply. "He is a civil engineer, and he had a partner in the same profession who was known as Billy Bowlegs. Billy is as straight on his legs as any one in Camp, but he had been nick-named that some time before and the name stuck to him. Fullerton told me the circumstances."

"Let's have the story if there is one," proposed Fillmore.

"There isn't much of one, but I'll tell it, just as it was told me by Fullerton. Billy is an Englishman, and when he came to Arizona was probably no more of a fool than Easterners generally are on arriving. He's a man of good appearance, and his manners are all right too, but this is owing to his Arizona acquaintances, who took him in hand and exhibited a friendly interest in him from the start. He had strolled into a miner's outfitting store one day, and, while waiting to be attended to, learned from the talk of two miners who were making some purchases that they intended starting on a prospecting trip the following day. The young Englishman, out for adventure, entered into conversation with them and proposed joining them on their trip.

"His education began on the following morning, when, a mile or two out, they asked him his name.

"Billy produced his card containing a hyphenated surname something like 'Elwood-Cholmondelay.' His given names I forget, but they were also formidable,—'Hugh Edward de Carteret,' or something that sounded as if taken from a novel. In addition, there were cabalistic letters denoting the societies he belonged to in London and Paris. It was a critical hour for Billy, but he didn't know it.

"'I ain't got no cards, stranger,' said the other gravely, 'left 'em in my trunk back in town. My name's Lispenard Stewart Boggs, and my partner here is a Knickerbocker. We come from good old Dutch stock you bet. But out on the desert we drop the frills and I'm Boggs, just Boggs, and my partner here is called Nick. You're going to be Billy Bowlegs. We can't have no hyphenated surnames in this outfit. It wouldn't do; it would hurt us with the boys.' The disciplinary process must have extended much further, as there's nothing now to distinguish him from the others. He tells the story on himself once in a while."

"Shouldn't wonder but what his present name is more convenient to have around a mining camp. The other would sure have been a handicap," commented Fillmore.

"Billy and Berkely, while prospecting, were

over the ground together where the mine is, although it was not discovered on that trip."

"How did it come about?"

"They did not examine it thoroughly the first time. There were good indications, but they had been deceived by similar conditions elsewhere, and they had heard stories about prospects in another quarter which seemed so promising that they felt they were losing time remaining. After they had returned to Camp, the trip having proven fruitless, Berkely was impelled to go there a second time, and then made the strike. Each member works in some capacity in the mine, and can hold only a pro rata of the stock. On the death of any stockholder his stock lapses. Some meet this by life insurance. If a stockholder becomes dissatisfied, the others buy him out. As the stock cost them nothing in the first place, they were quite willing to make the arrangement, although at first sight it must appear rather fantastic to a practical man.

"They employ others, giving them a share in the profits, which pays them well. On the death or retirement of the last stockholder, which will take a long while yet, as they are mostly young men, the mine if not worked out passes to trustees, to be used in humanitarian work."

They were passing through pastoral scenes

which seemed to suggest an old civilization. It seemed hard to believe that only a generation ago this was desert land over which the Indians roamed in freedom. Peace and plenty seemed written large here. The ranch-houses, with their abundance of shade, their dairies, their fruit orchards, their orange or olive groves, bespoke the means for comfortable living. They passed some eucalyptus trees, the variety of which indicated their foreign origin.

"How much better off these people are than if they lived in cities," moralized White. "Compare their mode of living with that of the average business man and his continual rush and hurry: These people have time to live."

"Yes," assented Fillmore, "the tendency of the average business man is to overwork himself, with the object before him of getting more money than he can ever use."

"Business," observed White, in his favorite rôle of cynic, "as a general thing, consists in gouging your neighbor all he will stand. The relation of a business man to his customer is that of a hunter and his prey."

"I cannot agree with you at all," rejoined Fillmore. "Without business, the race might perish from off the earth. Of course this is true of farming too, which is also a kind of business. The

occupation most frequently mentioned by the Romans, outside of politics, is farming. In a better state of society, to which I believe we are progressing, those professions which deal with human infirmity, physical or mental, such as medicine and the law, which are now needed because of the ignorance and selfishness of mankind, will become superfluous for the most part. But farming and mercantile business will always be necessary and on that account will always carry a dignity with them unknown to most other occupations."

"To spend the greater part of your life getting your living, which Thoreau reprobated so much, seems to be peculiarly the fate of the business man. More business men lose health through their occupation than in any other walk in life," affirmed White.

"It's a fault of the times; there's too much competition," assented Fillmore. "People lose sight of the fact that health bears a more intimate relation to all the affairs of life than money. If people were to show the same anxiety for health that they do for money, the race would greatly improve, morally and physically, in one generation."

Their road hitherto had led them through a fine ranch country, but now, the last irrigation ditch have been passed and the higher land

reached, above the ditches, to which water could not flow, they were on the desert. Threading their way in among hillocks and mountains, gradually ascending, they soon left all vestige of civilization behind, except the roadway, kept open by the occupants of the mining camps on the way. Henceforth, until they returned, there would be no sign of cultivated growth. Cacti, greasewood, sagebrush—of the desert kind, there would be a-plenty, but not so much as a blade of grass to tell of the presence of man.

They noticed many beautiful little valleys, sun-kissed—sheltered by bulwarks of mountains from the cold winds of the North—which would make ideal sites for health camps. They would be uninhabitable in summer, but for the winter nothing could be finer. As they entered one such, Fillmore remarked:

"This could be made a lungers' paradise in winter. Almost surrounded by mountains, there would be little wind, which is the only drawback we have."

"I'd rather be near town," White remarked, "and put up with a few wind-storms during a winter."

"Yes, but if the government would take hold of the work, such a valley as this would accommodate several thousands, which would make a town



Threading their way in among hillocks and mountains, gradually ascending.

of itself. It may sound visionary, but that is what will eventually have to be done. The individual will take the initiative in the work, and when public opinion is sufficiently aroused to the importance of it, the government will take hold and complete it."

"These little valleys," said the volatile White, "which will probably forever remain worthless for farming purposes, used as health camps might be the means of saving thousands of lives annually."

"A trolley road will have to be built to connect them with one another and with the outside world," said Fillmore, putting another story to the air-castle in fullest faith that the foundations will be reared in due time. "They'll have to have it so as to get the supplies in, and give the people an opportunity to go back and forth." After a pause he added: "Who would have thought as late as a decade ago, that the government could be induced to take up the irrigation work as it has done. Admirable as this project is, it pales into insignificance when compared with the work we are discussing, in its importance to mankind."

A wren, emerging from its nest high up among the thorns of the giant saguaro, dashed close to his head as he was speaking, as if in playful query as to his business on the desert. The nest had been skilfully hollowed out among the thorns of

this cactus, which here attains a height of fifty feet, and formed a safe refuge for the little creature.

"When I'm older," said White, apropos of nothing in particular, "I shall devote myself to philosophical writing. Philosophy embodies the highest and best that we can conceive of in literature." Then he began a philippic against fiction, to which the other, seeing an amusing hour ahead, and knowing the advisability of playing your catch before landing it, made but slight response.

"Fiction is for youth or early life," went on White oracularly, "when one satisfies oneself with illusions. Youth likes illusions, but middle age wants facts; illusions suffice no longer, something more *intime* is required, and philosophy becomes its resource."

Fillmore's silence being construed into assent, he went on with an air of finality. "There's nothing deep or lasting about fiction. You are only admitted inside the author's grounds. He lets you look at the outside of his house, admire his gardens, play with his dog, but you do not get beyond the threshold. He sometimes entertains you with fireworks, and when you become mutually tired of each other sends you home. In philosophy, if you are capable of the right appreciation, you become a bosom friend, the honored

guest of your host, who will share his innermost thought with you."

"But fiction gives you pictures of real life, while philosophy only relates to the conduct of life. A photograph full of detail is better than a signboard," rejoined Fillmore in rebuttal.

"All the same," declared White, "I want to try and do something more solid when I grow older. To me, a career like that of Schopenhauer, with sufficient means to live your life as you want to, and with the disposition to live it well—that is something worth while."

Fillmore, although with a strong personal liking for his companion, was never averse to being entertained at his expense.

"What point of view shall you take when that time comes?" he asked. "Shall you be pessimist?"

"I'm too young for the rôle as yet, Filly," White replied with easy familiarity. "In youth it's easy to be an optimist. If I were well, life would be a perfect bargain-counter of opportunities. If I had good health, it would be a case of an embarrassment of riches; there would be so many things that would seem easy of attainment that it might puzzle me to come to a decision.

"But I'm already old enough to see that it's the game, the hunt, that's interesting, the stakes

are secondary. By the time I have attained to a small competency, and this seems not impossible if I can regain my health, I shall probably be well on toward middle age, a period to which pessimism seems well adapted."

"You mean that you start out as an optimist, because you have as yet all your opportunities before you, and that as you gradually exhaust them, extracting the good out of them by the time you reach middle age, you will become pessimistic because of their being exhausted?"

"I suppose it might narrow down to that," White admitted. "Youth, according to the inscription on our clock at the High School, 'is the seed-time of life,' and one cannot but be hopeful in seed-time. Lots of things can and do happen between that and harvest, but you don't let that trouble you."

After a short pause Fillmore answered with slow emphasis. "Fiction influences fifty persons where Philosophy does one. You mentioned Schopenhauer just now. Think of all the people you know, and count up how many you will credit with having read his chief work through. Your thumbs will more than suffice to keep the reckoning on."

White gave a reluctant assent and he continued: "Take the novel of Uncle Tom's Cabin, for

instance, which really brought the political situation to a focus and precipitated the Civil War. Has any philosophical work ever influenced mankind to anything like such an extent?"

"But this result was not secured through the deserts of the work," asserted White; "it was the opportuneness of its appearance that brought it about. The book came at the psychological moment to insure its instant acceptance. Had it appeared ten years earlier it might have fallen flat. Had its publication been deferred ten or fifteen years, its opportunities might have gone by. Some other solution of the difficulty might have presented itself."

"So many people are like children," discoursed Fillmore; "their bodies grow up, but their minds remain as in childhood, retaining most of their infantile characteristics. Though the body be forty, the mind accompanying it often seems no more than fourteen, as regards its knowledge. We human beings can best be led by parables as Jesus well knew, or else by suggestion and other Frobelian methods. Books are a most tangible expression of the intellectual faculty, and we must have all sorts, but the novel will always remain the most assimilable form in which ideas can be conveyed to most people."

Their road, still ascending, now skirting the

talus at the mountain's foot in a riot of light and color due to the porphyry, the pale green of the cacti gorgeously dressed in blossoms, with the yellow sunlight streaming over all—anon threading a narrow defile of sombre browns and grays—led them at a sudden turn into a canyon, dark and forbidding. In the old days of Indian warfare, now forever past, it would have served admirably the purposes of an ambush. Though cooler here than out on the desert, they pressed on with what haste they could, filled with a nameless dread, a sense of loneliness and apprehension, that they felt could not have been accounted for on physical grounds. The silence oppressed them as by a weight; conversation was out of the question. When Fillmore, who was driving, urged on the ponies, his voice sounded hoarse and unnatural. Not until they emerged into the open was their talk resumed.

"Why don't you abandon your novel and try your hand at a short story?" began Fillmore, the canyon once passed. "This would be more in line with your previous work. You might make a good story about Blakeslee. There is a lot in it that would be effective."

"But there must be numbers of such deaths each year here, among the thousands that come. I know of several myself. You must have heard

of the cemetery in Los Angeles with the inscription over the gateway:

TO THE UNKNOWN DEAD.

They were mostly consumptives who were lured there in the hope of recovery. No doubt some died of starvation."

"All the more need of exploiting the situation with the view of getting it remedied. The moral is obvious enough; they ought not to be here alone, and with scant means, so long as no provision is made for them. Or rather, adequate provision should be made for them, either at their homes or here. They should not be left to perish like dogs."

"It may have the elements of a strong story in it," rejoined White, "but I'm afraid the subject would be painful."

"The fact of its being painful need not bar it. All tragedy is that. How much that is painful, even repulsive, you will find in the newspapers, yet how eagerly they're read. It depends on the telling though. A story with only the one character! It would naturally be introspective, analytical. The fact of your having known him should enable you to make something realistic out of it.

You must often have made good newspaper stories out of much slenderer material."

"It would be depressing to me. I would be apt not to spare myself. I feel that some blame attaches to me in the matter. I had conditionally agreed to go with him. We had been camping together, as you know, all the previous summer and up to the time he went out on the desert. When it came to the point, however, I developed an overpowering dislike to the plan of going so far away from everybody, and tried my best to dissuade him from going too. I believe to the last he thought I would come. I have never felt right about it," concluded White. "I couldn't make copy out of such a thing."

"To the writer, everything that comes to him —his holiest associations, the death of a child, love, sorrow, remorse—all eventually come to be copy. The Threnody finds an answering chord in thousands of human breasts, and it is likely that Emerson's own grief for the death of his boy was assuaged through writing it."

But White appeared to be unconvinced.

"This single character, silhouetted on the imagination, alone on the desert, bereft, troubled in mind and body, is to be pictured as finding a resource in Nature at the last, and must even find compensation," continued Fillmore, knowing that

White liked being urged, that he had already decided on writing the story anyway, knowing even that White knew this, both keeping up the by-play, in accordance with the mental characteristics of each.

"He is alone with Nature. Everything else has been taken from him. It affords fine opportunities for description of mountain and desert. Of this, the half has never been told. Put in atmosphere—purpling dawns and sea-green sunsets, mirages—everything can be said of Arizona with truth on these lines. It's more paintable so far as word picturing goes, than California. Its mysticism takes hold on the imagination. I've sometimes thought I could do something myself with the subject. Have you ever met with Chateaubriand's 'Night in an American Forest'? A word-picture of the desert at night,—its isolation, its enthralling silence and vastness,—if well done would more than parallel it."

"But there's no plot," objected White, "and with but the one character, there can be no conversation."

"There's a plot, using the selfishness of the cousins—you remember their letters? as a background. You can hint at the cousin being a coquette, who had been toying with him. But you don't need a plot," said Fillmore, shifting his

ground as the incongruity of it struck him. "It's the descriptive part that comes out strongly in such a story, and this is of more importance than plot or conversation. Conversation's the easiest thing in the world to manufacture. The story can even end happily. A Lafcadio Hearn might have done marvels with it."

"I could never attempt it," replied White, determined to begin it as soon as they returned to Camp. "It would give me a setback. The very thought of him is a reproach."

"You'd get over that quick enough once you got started on it. It would ease your mind and might have good results in calling attention to such phases of the tuberculosis problem. Since the fact has been established that the disease is curable as well as communicable and preventable, interest in the subject has been growing steadily among all classes until now it is recognized as one of the very important subjects before the world."

They passed a clump of candlewood in leaf after the recent rain. Fillmore had not seen it since the rain, and stopped the ponies the better to examine it. After remarking on the curious habit of the candlewood and some other of the desert growths, of putting out leaves only after a rain, withdrawing them as soon as the moisture required for their sustenance has evaporated—a

process which is repeated during the year without reference to season, he continued the conversation where he had broken off.

"Government and people will have to work in conjunction in handling the tuberculosis problem," went on Fillmore. "From the point of view of self-protection, if from no higher motive, this will have to be done. While it is the greatest scourge among the diseases which afflict mankind, there is no reason why it should continue to be so as it is readily controllable given the right equipment to cope with it. The most powerful force in the world is public opinion. Anything can be achieved by its aid, and the novel, to come back to our previous topic, is one of the most effective instruments by which it can be influenced. You can contribute your mite to the general fund by telling the Blakeslee story."

"Almost thou persuadest me," replied White, rapidly summing up its salient features, and thinking how inadequately they had been presented by Fillmore as compared with the picture of it in his own mind. "But I never could do it."

CHAPTER XIII

HOURLY the sun became more in evidence. Over a third of the distance to the Camp had been covered so far, and men and horses were yet fresh. So far as enduring the fatigue of the trip went, the horses, doing all the work would have by far the best of it. No urging was necessary here. Sandy roads, dust, heat—they were inured to all, and would have cause for thankfulness if they got a mouthful of hay and a drink of water at noon.

The nooning was made under an overhanging rock which afforded some shelter from the ever-present sun. Patches of greasewood grew at their feet, masses of porphyry fantastically shaped lay all about them. In the midst, all around, loomed up the giant cacti, holding high carnival with scores of large white blossoms at the extremity of their branches. The pale green of the trunks, each so magically decked out in its beauty of form and purity of tone, contrasted finely with the deep blue of the sky above and the red of the porphyry beneath. The desert was fair to look upon.

They partook of their sandwiches and fruit, discoursing as they ate. Their lemonade, protected somewhat from the heat, was to the thirsty travelers fairly palatable, and the slight repast was relished to an extent that a much better meal in the city would not have afforded them.

They descried with their glasses a vulture sailing in stately fashion, leisurely hunting his quarry through valley and over mountain. How content he seemed! With what serenity he sailed the ether as if superior to fate.

"How picturesquely things arrange themselves," exclaimed White, to whom conversation was a necessity, "not only in Nature as we see it right here on the desert where everything seems admirable of its kind, but among individuals as well. In our Camp, made up by the accidental gathering together of a dozen people from all quarters of the country, we have quite an interesting community; and all without design, from no set purpose. It seems just to have arranged itself, as if some informing spirit in each had directed them to a common rendezvous. Each contributes his quota to a sum total which is quite unique."

"The infinite variety in Nature is its greatest charm," assented Fillmore. "You can take a dozen men from any large body and put them into

a camp, and the product would be equally original though wholly different from ours."

"What diversity there is among them. How picturesque the Padre with his gray hair and his youthful face. What a contrast his partner, our little Deacon presents, in his musical setting and his dreamy, vision-gazing air. How decorative they both are, each in his own *genre.* If it were acting, the make-up of each would be the perfection of art."

"It's better than art, it's Nature."

"It's the same through the whole company," continued White, "we're not all so decorative as these two,—there are gradations in everything, —but we have a good *ensemble.* Even Micky, with his freckles and red hair—his swagger, has his esthetic value. He furnishes color in a double sense."

"You're as decorative as any of them, White," responded the other. "Don't depreciate yourself. You may not be so good-looking as the Padre; you're too young yet for one thing, but if you're good, you may grow into the part."

"I don't believe he got his good looks by being good," answered White with a grin. "That gray hair is not due to early piety."

"The Padre is quite a different individual even in appearance, from what he was when he first

came here. The desert is good for others than lungers."

Near by, where they sat, they descried a huge bisnaga or barrel cactus which had been cut off near the top, and the pulp scooped out. It had furnished water for some improvident wayfarer, a prospector probably, whose canteen water had been insufficient. Completely enveloped in spines bent like fishhooks, and as sharp, Nature had armed it cap-a-pie against any animal except man that would seek to invade its central reservoir of water. White, with the inquiring mind of youth, thought he would like to try some of the liquid, and procured an augur from the tool chest, which is part of the outfit on trips into the desert, but the hole that was bored with it yielded nothing but shavings. Then, nothing daunted, he took an axe, cut off the top of one, and soon had what he wanted.

"You have to go at things in the right way to get results," moralized Fillmore. "It's so in the cure of lungers too. I think the Padre's going at it in the right way."

"With an axe?" asked White.

It was time to be moving forward. When again under way, Fillmore began:

"Don't you think our mode of life out here develops individuality? The desert environment

for one thing, with the solitude which is its necessary concomitant. One can expand in all directions like a pine tree in an open space. City life tends to make men of one pattern. Individuality is not desired in the thick of the fight. All must be subordinated to the one common purpose."

"All the same, if I recover my health I'll go back to it. I hope to be able to make a small competency yet, in spite of everything."

"Better take up the tuberculosis campaign as a life-work. That's what I shall do. It's one of the great issues of the day. And you're more likely to keep your health too, which is the main thing. Money-making is bad for the health. It sure makes lungers. I shall stay right along in our Camp as I've told you. I'll have my living out of it, and that's as much as any of us need desire. Then too, there are interesting possibilities in the work. From a scientific point of view it's fine to think of grappling with a disease like tuberculosis, which may invade any family, and conquering it. And there's a chance for communal theories to crystallize. The health camp is communal, if anything." After a pause he went on: "The work of the Camp may in large part come eventually to be carried on by the graduates. In the big Eastern sanatoriums, the opportunity is given the graduates to remain and qualify for

nurses, as well as participate in the farm work. Some of them do so, and the same plan could be inaugurated here. The nurses would be a valuable addition to the new Camps. Others could combine and operate fruit or dairy ranches, and they would have the strongest reasons for holding together.

"Life in a health camp such as ours will develop into," continued Fillmore, "bears some resemblance to the monastic life. It's a kind of withdrawal from the world and one comes to like it after a while. This is the case in the big Eastern sanatoriums. The regular systematic life suits the occupants, and they leave, when cured, often with real regret, knowing that while there, they are safe, or at least in a measure protected from the many pitfalls that lie in the path of the unwary."

"The Mirage!" exclaimed White excitedly. "Look over there. Isn't that a mirage?"

Shimmering into form they saw this desert marvel, which, though not peculiar to the desert, is more associated with it than any other phenomenon. Held up to view in the blue ether, this picture, fashioned by the cunning of the supreme Artist, held something ineffable in its beauty and mystery to the wayfarers, as it were for their delectation alone.

Slowly, even as they watched it, it faded from view, their eyes probably having been the only ones to behold it.

"Wealth has grown so rapidly in this country within the past decade; so far beyond the possibilities of the individual need in myriads of cases," began Fillmore, harking back to his theme, "that it must come to be the greatest satisfaction of the wealthy to engage in helpful work for others so as to put their surplus to some use. Say what you like, every right-minded person likes to be of benefit to others. When they can assure themselves that their money will be well applied, they like to give."

"Do you know the history of the Denver Camp?" asked White.

"No," replied Fillmore. "I know that there is one there, but that is all I do know about it."

"It was started in this way," said White narratively. "A foreign gentleman, a physician I think, from Germany, had been traveling in this country, and noticed the lamentably inadequate facilities for handling the tuberculosis problem here as compared with his own country. What was hardest for him to understand, and which troubled him after he had returned to his home, was the number of young men, consumptives, that he saw at Denver who appeared to be almost

without means, and for whom no provision had been made."

"It's about the same here in Arizona right now," interrupted Fillmore, "although in that altitude they may become more nervous, and so magnify their sufferings more; but it's bad enough here."

"This gentleman," went on White, "with the spectacle of these helpless young men before him, sent five thousand dollars to the Y. M. C. A. at Denver, instructing them to employ it in establishing a health camp for this class of men. Residents of Denver, not to be outdone, contributed land near the city as well as additional money, and the work was put on a good foundation from its incipiency. They take care of fifty young men now, at twenty-five dollars per month each, and there's always a waiting list."

"Five thousand dollars!" exclaimed Fillmore, "and from Germany! Why, dollars are a good deal scarcer and harder come by there than here."

"All the more credit to him. This was the pioneer effort. Soon after, the Jewish element, generally to the fore in philanthropic work of this kind, followed suit at Denver with a similar camp. There's one in Southern California too, at Indio, and it has the advantage of being at sea-level.

"When people come to realize the plight of men like us," continued White, "when they find out the need of the work, and the interesting possibilities that it presents in effecting cures, many more such camps will spring up in suitable places."

"And the good results of the work don't end with the cures effected," averred Fillmore. "Each person who has lived in a health camp or sanatorium for six months or a year, and leaves it with his disease arrested, is forever after a missionary, preaching the gospel of hygienic living. He talks it in season and out. The discipline of the Camp has grown into a habit with him; he believes in it and seeks to propagate it whenever possible. Then too, if there were enough camps and sanatoria so that every invalid, as soon as the fact of the sickness is established, could avail himself or herself of the means of cure, the principal source of infection would be removed. This, of itself, would at once greatly decrease the number of new cases."

They stopped at a convenient spot at the foot of a hill, where was a clump of palo verde, resting for a few moments under it, for the slight protection that it afforded from the glare of the sun. One gets but little shade from desert vegetation, and now that the sun was almost directly overhead,

even the trunk of the giant saguaro afforded no relief. Not until they could get into a defile would there be any shade for them.

"The next time we make a trip into the desert as late in the season as this, we'll either have a covered wagon, or we'll travel by night," began White, when they were again under way. "The umbrella's a little protection but not much. We'll try to return by night. Some one from Bowlegs will probably be coming to town when we're ready to return, and would probably prefer making the trip by night."

"I should enjoy a night ride on the desert," responded Fillmore, "but I'd want some one along who knew the road."

The talus of the mountain through which they were passing was here rough and broken. Druidical rocks rose up all about. Absolute silence enveloped them. No sign of living thing was to be seen.

"This will be a splendid world to live in some time, when people learn how to live," said Fillmore, whiling away the tedium that now and then began to assert itself after they had ridden a mile or two in silence, by starting a conversation on another tack. "We're gradually working toward the goal. Things that are established facts in this generation, seemed too visionary to a previous one

to be considered. Nothing's too good to expect or look forward to."

"Very true," responded White, "but there was something fine too in the life of the Greeks, in which the intellect ruled, and the pleasures of the senses were, on the whole, subordinate to a greater degree than is the case at present."

A burned-out camp-fire along the roadside with hay plentifully scattered about, showed where a party of prospectors had recently camped. It gave a human touch to the scene which appealed to the friends. In all the distance they had covered since leaving town they had seen no human being or any vestige of civilization. To be so sundered from humankind in all this vastness and silence awed their spirits. A vision of what it must mean to be lost on the desert, rose up before them, and they were glad of even this evidence of their kind.

The afternoon wore slowly on, the indomitable ponies toiling on with no more indication of fatigue than when they started in the morning. The dust, impalpable, ubiquitous, had settled impartially on every portion of the outfit. The visitors would have to make their appearance at the Camp even in this guise, as their water would be all but consumed on the road.

The heat became oppressive; conversation

lagged. White looked at his watch,—only a little after three. Not until five, could they expect relief from the intense heat. Beast or shrub however, seemed any the worse for it. Everything that lives on the desert from man to tree becomes tough, hardy, resistant, abstemious. Each is admirably adapted to its environment. No desert vegetation droops. The blossoms of the giant saguaro, supported by their reservoir of water within, as is the case with all cacti, maintained an appearance of freshness throughout the day.

Still the sun was omnipresent, overpowering, dominating everything in high-handed manner. The friends began to feel like parts of a machine; all volition seemed gone from them; the straining horses, the slowly moving wagon, they themselves seemed parts of some phantasmagoria. Luckily the road was well defined; at every intersection a signboard was placed, so there was no anxiety on the score of finding their way.

A mirage which suddenly came into view before their eyes gave the needed stimulus. They roused themselves to look at it, and Fillmore got out his camera and made an attempt to photograph it. Although he saw it plainly enough on the ground glass, and took all due precautions in getting the negative, the plate was a blank when it came to be developed the next day, thus confirm-

ing what others had told him of their experiences on the same lines.

Bowlegs Camp was situated on the further edge of a mesa which had to be crossed to reach it. Almost as soon as the travelers descried the group of tents and the few trees which made up the Camp, they noticed a man mounted on a pony cantering toward them. By the aid of their glasses they made him out to be Fullerton, who had been expecting them, and had been on the lookout. With this escort they made their entry into Camp, all the boys (and some of the girls too) turning out to meet them.

CHAPTER XIV

"I SHOULD like to have been present when Fullerton made his appeal to the boys to have their sisters come on," said Fillmore, while making the tour of the Camp with Dick, on the morning following the arrival of the visitors. They had been discussing the changes that had come over the Camp with the advent of Berkely's sister. "A woman is generally ready and willing to make sacrifices for the men of her family," he went on, "but not for the sisters of the friends of the men of her family," which Ollendorfian bit of logic met with a ready response in Dick's breast, and ended in a loud guffaw. He thought of his sister Clara, self-sufficient, strong-minded; Clara, with her Day Nursery, her Society for the Chloroforming of Friendless Cats, her numberless other activities—and the humor of the situation rose up in him again so that he had to give vent to another roar, in which Fillmore joined, and which brought two or three of the miners to the doors of their tents.

When he had sobered down a little he said:

"The funniest part of it was that he was in such dead earnest about it. He drew some terrifying possibilities to the boys. One of them was: 'How would any of you fellows like to live for months in a Camp and be the only man among all women?' It was a knock-down argument which brought a hush on the company. Then he clinched the matter by saying: 'It would be as bad for her to be the only woman here, as for one of us to live in a Camp composed entirely of women.'" Dick laughed again; was it from sheer youthful ebullience, or was there some deeper cause?

He thought again of his sister Clara, recalling her decided opinions on all subjects, including illness. He remembered her strictures on a man with a wife and four children who had been so indiscreet as to be laid up with an attack of rheumatism. "Positively reprehensible in a man with such responsibilities; he might have prevented it with due precaution," she had said in commenting on it. Clearly, her sympathies did not go out readily to invalids.

And then he thought of something else that had come into his life, thought of it with his pulses running riot within him, thought of it with wonder that he, Dick, should have been singled out for such happiness, should be so favored of fortune. Poor old Fullerton! How can he stand

it living alone this way, and with nothing but this to look forward to for the rest of his life! Poor old Fullerton! and fortunate, fortunate Dick (so ran the corollary in his mind), for had not Nancy, Nancy Berkely, the loveliest girl in all the world, promised to marry him? And this was only three days ago! To think that he had lived contentedly all these years! No, he had not been content. Compared with the present, the years had been barren years, and the life a poor sort of life. And he didn't care what Clara would say! Yesterday he had written her with a quaking heart, telling her all about it, but in the interval he had already grown independent. With her advanced notions on physiology and the improvement of the race she would probably disapprove, but it should not count a feather's weight with him; he had reached a stage where he would have faced an army to carry his point. The race indeed! As if there were anything in the universe so significant, as that they two lived and loved one another!

True, Miss Berkely had insisted that the engagement be a conditional one, pending her restoration to health, but this was almost certain to come about under the favoring conditions now prevailing. The chances were all in his favor; he need not worry on that score, he told himself.

Clearly it was a case of love at first sight—on the part of the susceptible Dick even before a sight of the beloved had been vouchsafed him. Berkely had wired him when taking the train from Chicago with his sister, thereby setting Dick's foolish heart all aflame with love and desire. He told Miss Berkely, Nancy now (adorable name, Nancy!) that the engagement really dated from the receipt of the telegram in his consciousness. How fortunate that he was in town that day, attending to the finishing touches of the improvements to the Camp and so got the telegram without delay! They were so evidently meant for one another; and then he lauded his intuitions that had so truly apprised him of it, adding that with every mile she was speeding westward he had felt more and more strongly the magnetism of her approach.

"But we stopped three hours in Kansas City with a hot-box," said Nancy momentarily practical. "How was it then?"

Dick thought her more adorable than ever.

Of the endless confidences that came to be exchanged between them, one fact stood out in ineffaceable, inexpugnable clearness, to wit: that the little god Cupid, in his inscrutable wisdom, had reserved them for each other out of all the people in the world, bringing them here—perhaps having

taken health away temporarily, to the end that they might meet.

Common sense had indeed tried to butt in on the matter, but had met with a poor reception for its pains. "Common sense indeed! It's sense of a very uncommon kind that directs you in these matters," thought Dick, "enabling you to approach a happiness like this, bringing you to the very acme of your life with Fortune designing you as her favorite! Common sense, this knave, this liar and trickster that always tries to prevent you from having what you want on the ground of it not being good for you, wanting to keep you from grasping at such an opportunity, as if it would ever be presented again! To turn your back on this trickster and obey yourself—was not this wisdom of the highest kind? Having gotten your heart's desire, would you barter it for anything in creation?" Wise, foolish Dick!

Dick's proposition to Fullerton about marrying, given in jest though it was, opened up the past to the older man in a way that the other could not have remotely suspected. Practical men like Dick are not clairvoyant, and he would never know that he had touched on a sore spot under the quiet demeanor of the older man. As a matter of fact, Fullerton was married. It was through being married that Arizona had him for a sojourner.

He had married when quite young, a girl two years his senior. The marriage lottery had held no prize for him, and within two years matters had come to a climax.

Fullerton, always passive, would have let matters drift, but his wife, more positive, took the initiative. On the occasion of his absence in another city for a week, whither he had been sent by the firm by whom he was employed at the time, she had gathered together the lares and penates, stripping the house of everything and leaving only his wearing-apparel, sending everything to her father's house in a village some thirty miles distant, whither she also went. He returned at night to an empty house, without so much as a note of explanation having been left for him. The humiliation of it was more than even he could endure; he made no effort at reconciliation, but resigned his position and started for the West, not caring much where he ended up, so that he might put distance between them, and if possible forget the past.

The letters that came to him from his people gave but meagre information regarding his wife's movements. Her mother had been dead some years before her marriage. She was an only child. Her father, they reported, had disapproved of the step she had taken in leaving her husband, and

probably had not made things pleasant for her. At all events, after the expiration of a few weeks she left him, and returned to the city and her old occupation of stenography.

This was eight years ago, and nothing definite had come to Fullerton since, regarding her. It was current gossip in the village that she had never communicated with her father after leaving him, and as this was vouched for by the postmistress herself it was generally accepted as truth. Her father had now been dead five years, and this mysterious absence was still maintained. The old mansion on the hill, from which they had been married, now closed and deserted, with all its quaint old furnishings still there, without owner or even caretaker, must be the occasion of much comment in the village he sometimes thought.

Fullerton had a sister back East, a Mrs. Bradshawe, who, while not a newsmonger or gossip, was considered fairly good at finding out things of interest. She had been able to gather very little information on this topic, but this little was always dutifully given him in detail, notwithstanding the fact that he never referred to the matter in his letters to her.

When he returned to his tent that night after Dick had "joshed" him about marrying, he un-

locked a tin box which he kept at the bottom of his trunk, and took out a letter. It read:

DEAR BOY BOBBY:

I have some news about Mr. Cameron which you should know. I don't like to open up the subject of your unfortunate marriage. It's much the best course to forget under the circumstances, but this concerns you. The old gentleman is dead. He died a week ago, and was buried last Thursday. Bobby, *that woman never even wore mourning at the funeral.* And there were no mourners! Did you ever hear of such a thing? To think that you should have run up against such eccentric people. She kept her veil down all during the service and when it was over, left the house without speaking to anyone, and took the next train out of town.

I am glad to receive your letter, and to know that you have returned safely from that prospecting trip in the mountains. What with the Apaches, and the mountain lions, and the Gila monsters—you see I've been reading up about Arizona—I am in suspense from one letter to the next for fear that you have succumbed to one peril or another. When I think of the way she has served you, driving you to that horrible country, I feel that no punishment could be too great for her.

Then followed a description of the funeral.

There was a newspaper clipping from an issue some months subsequent to the date of the letter he had just read. He took it up mechanically and went over its contents.

Since the death of Hugh Cameron a few months ago, the house on the hill, which he owned and occupied for so many years, has been closed and presents a forlorn appearance.

Nothing has yet transpired in regard to the whereabouts of his daughter, Mrs. Fullerton, whose presence is necessary to the settlement of the estate. From all accounts there is not much of an estate to settle, as it appears he left nothing but the fine old house in which he lived for so many years. It is said, in fact, that he was in straitened circumstances toward the last and, had he lived much longer, would have had to mortgage his house. As it is, the house is free from incumbrance. There is no will, and as his daughter, Mrs. Fullerton, inherits under the law, it is important to find her. Lawyer Edmundston, who had the management of the affairs of the late Mr. Cameron, has caused an advertisement to appear in the city in which she last resided, and it is hoped this will produce the desired result.

Subsequent letters from his sister were of the same tenor, generally prefaced by a deprecatory clause to the effect that she didn't want to open up the past. They told how the house, being still closed and deserted, would get the reputation of being haunted if this state of things were continued long—how the furnishings and appointments were still intact, the lawyer making occasional inspections, how nothing could be done toward disposing of it pending the return of the daughter. The deterioration of the place, the accumulated taxes—money for which the attorney was advancing, the necessity of repairs to keep it intact, all made it necessary that she come forward so that the place could be disposed of, and some remnant of the inheritance saved.

"What she needed," wrote Fullerton's sister in a subsequent letter, "was a strong masterful man, who would have made some things plain to her from the start. You were too passive, too non-resistant; a stronger man might have taken the foolishness out of her, although I don't know as it would have been worth the trouble. She was a spoiled child if there ever was one."

He sat up late that night musing. In the old life of adventure, he had been fairly content, but all at once the prospect ahead of living alone through the coming years seemed dreary indeed. He began to realize how alone in the world he was; and the one great need of the human—to love and to be loved—came upon him all of a sudden with overwhelming force. Dick's jest had awakened and called into being all the longing for fireside joys which he had for so long suppressed.

"Would it have to go on this way for always? By what right," he asked himself fiercely, "should this be required of him? Had he not endeavored to make the best of things? The home had never been a pleasant one, his wife uncongenial, but he had always been patient, hoping that harmony would come in time. And before this could be brought about she had abandoned him. He didn't even know whether she were still living. Had he

not endured enough as it was? There ought to be something else in life besides renunciation!"

Before going to bed that night Fullerton wrote Mr. Edmundston, asking for particulars concerning his wife. It was possible that she had already divorced him, serving the notice by publication. This would not surprise him, he thought. It would only be on a line with her general attitude toward him, and, in any event, it would be well to know the status of things in the matter.

White and Fillmore remained in Camp several days, during which White began taking notes for his story of Blakeslee. Fillmore, greatly interested in the little sociological experiment going on there, both as regards the mine, as well as the health camp, made it his business to get acquainted with the miners, and also struck up a friendship with the young physician, Dr. Myers. The work already inaugurated here, though of a different character from that which was being evolved at their own Camp, gave promise of good results. With the advent of the ladies a poultry yard had been inaugurated, a cow had been installed, although feed had to be packed many miles across the desert, a laundry for the use of all was maintained, and a good vegetable garden carried on.

At first, some of the miners continued to do

their own cooking from force of habit, but now they all ate at the common table, or rather tables, as there were several, and the greater comfort of it all, as well as the superior quality of the food, amply repaid them for their work and outlay in the new departure. The social side of it appealed to them too. It came to be a kind of festive occasion to them, dining in the presence of ladies, and they were only just becoming aware of the privations they had hitherto undergone.

Given the right material to work on, we know Cupid can ply his arts as successfully out on the desert as in the crowded marts of trade. All he wants is half a chance, and he had this, and more with the advent of the ladies at Camp Bowlegs. Having secured so good a votary in Dick, the efforts of the little winged creature were next directed toward what seemed a more unpromising subject, but this, too, was finally carried through to a successful issue, without much difficulty. "When a man buys Germantown wool," thought White that day in the department store in town, "he's already hard hit." But of Fullerton and Cupid, more anon.

The problem with the invalids of where to spend the summer loomed up here at Bowlegs as elsewhere. It was now May, and with the advent of summer, the question became daily more insist-

ent. At times it already became uncomfortably warm at midday; what it would be in July might be conjectured. The long-continued heat of the Arizona summer, in the valley, becomes depressing to the invalids, with the result that the gain achieved during the winter, is often lost in the summer sojourn. This the boys were aware of, and, flattered by Fillmore's interest in their work, they held a meeting, at which it was unanimously resolved to provide a Summer Camp for the invalids. (It was characteristic of them that the word "lunger," everywhere in use in Arizona, more especially by the invalids themselves, was never used by the miners since the advent of the ladies.)

Should the health of the visitors continue to improve as in the past, they would probably be in condition to be graduated after another winter, as they were incipient cases for the most part. With dismay the thought came to them that with recovery there would be no further occasion for their presence in the Camp—until it occurred to them that others could readily be induced to come in their places. It was not to be thought of, to allow the Camp to revert to its former condition of privation and discomfort. That they themselves would be benefited as a result of the experiment, was something that had never oc-

curred to them when starting the project, and it was a compensation as unexpected as agreeable. They would continue the work. It involved labor as well as expense to care for invalids so far from civilization, but on the social side alone they found it well worth while. Each man-jack of them worked more assiduously in the added incentive which the project offered.

Yes, they would continue to extend the hospitality of the Camp to a few invalids right along, summer and winter. The means for doing it came out of the ground placed there by the Almighty, perhaps for this very purpose, as Fullerton pointed out during the conclave (to which a hearty response of "You bet!" and "Bet your life!" from the others gave a suggestion as if proceeding from a religious meeting) and they couldn't apply a portion of their surplus to better use. The mine had cost them nothing in the first place beyond the prospecting, and they had a treasure in it, their labor bringing in much more than was needed for their own purposes. "Would it be a square deal toward the Giver," Fullerton asked, "for us to take this gift, and let others suffer, perhaps die, for want of a portion of this surplus which we cannot use anyway?"

Perhaps our greatest mistakes in life result from our inability to get at the point of view of others.

We are, most of us, so encysted with selfishness, that we are unable to see conditions as they are; we only see dimly, and with distorted vision. We are, for the most part, quite oblivious to what should be our right relations toward our fellow human beings. Even when their lives are bound up in ours is this too often the case. We see their difficulties from our point of view, a point of view so colored by our selfishness, that we are only too prone to minimize them. We see only the outer manifestation, not the inner pain. To us the tragedy being enacted under our very eyes seems meanwhile only an inconvenience which the sufferer should bear with equanimity.

These men, living close to the realities of life, —away from its sophistries and artificialities, apprehended the situation more correctly. Through aiding the invalids at their Camp toward recovery, they themselves attained to a clearer mental outlook. They discerned thereby that each is a debtor to others for what happiness is gotten from life, and that it is not enough to pay your financial obligations; the meanest clown does that. They came to perceive a wider obligation, the obligation of the individual to the whole, to ignore which is to make a defaulter of oneself. In giving of their surplus, they did not feel that they were performing a specially meritorious act; rather, as

the opportunity of doing their little toward squaring the account had presented itself to them in such agreeable fashion, they came to regard it as a privilege.

And the Camp prospered in greater measure than ever before. Whether this was owing to the fact that each now worked with more zest than formerly—having more incentive thereto, or that "the luck" had come to the Camp along with these ladies—a vein of superstition is generally a part of the make-up of the miner—there was no disputing the fact that more ore, and better ore was now coming to the surface than formerly, and the added expense of maintaining the health camp was in part being made up; the sacrifices they had made, had been by some strange alchemy transmuted into benefits.

It was finally decided that the best place for the Summer Camp would be in one of the valleys of Southern California, where the summer climate somewhat resembles that of the Arizona winter in the absence of rains and dews, and in the warm sunshiny days and clear, cool nights. Dick had argued in favor of having it somewhere in Arizona, the Verde country, or the region about Flagstaff; or the Coconino Forest near the Grand Cañon, but was overruled by the physician, who pointed out the great danger to some from the

extreme altitude, saying that even a moderate altitude was harmful in a third of the cases, and that any reasonable degree of coolness was not to be looked for in Arizona except at an altitude that might be injurious to these. It ended by Dick and the physician being delegated to go on ahead, select a suitable location, purchase tents and equipments, and, when all was ready, the others were to follow, under the charge of Berkely or Fullerton.

Of Dick, Fillmore saw but little after the California project was decided on. His clerical duties, in anticipation of his absence, kept him measurably busy, and his spare hours were devoted to Nancy. Honest Dick ran the gamut of the emotions these days. Nancy's recovery was the main thing, and, once convinced that this could be better effected in California he cooperated heartily with the project of establishing the Summer Camp there. Her departure must be hastened as much as possible. She must not remain here and lose what she had already gained. Her restoration to health meant the life happiness of both.

But the long separation! She must be absent at least five months, and how he was to get through this period, the poor fellow did not himself know. Five months! Each month would seem like a year. It was with a sinking of the heart that he thought of it. On the other hand, she would be

living under such healthful conditions there, that good progress toward recovery would be made, and at this thought, his depression would give way to elation.

All this he concealed from Nancy, whose outlook on life, to insure recovery, must be as pleasant as possible he argued. Acting on this, he often began to whistle on approaching her tent when his heart was like a stone within him. This did not deceive Nancy in the least, whose feminine intuitions enabled her to comprehend Dick's true frame of mind; but it brought her nearer to him in spirit, than had all his ardent protestations.

Fillmore's preoccupation with the others gave White a good opportunity for going on with his story; he meant to have it well on the road to completion before going away for the summer. The friends deferred their return to their own Camp until Dick and Dr. Myers were ready to start for California so as to enable them to make the trip to town together, and their stay at Bowlegs continued for nearly a week. Finally, however, Dick announced that he was ready, and they left on the following morning.

They made an early start, being on the road before daybreak, Dick and the physician in the saddle. Dick was preoccupied; in fact he had a grievance. He had not kissed Nancy, and would

probably not see her again in over a fortnight. A thousand miles would separate them, and he had not kissed her; he had never yet done so, kissing being strictly against the sanatorium discipline under which his recovery had been made. Hang the sanatorium! But what a discipline it was! How strongly they must have instilled the rules into his mind that the effect should so outlast his stay there! should so rise superior to desire! The fellows had sometimes compared existence there with that of the monastic life, and well they might, thought Dick.

He nursed his grievance all the morning, but at the nooning, his work of preparing coffee, frying bacon, and the other homely camp duties took his mind off his own affairs. He gave his companions an illustration of the prospector's camping methods, which dispenses not only with all superfluities but also most necessities. He made his fire of sagebrush, then wiping the dust out of the frying-pan with a piece of newspaper, turned the inside of the pan to the fire to cleanse it. No prospector ever wastes canteen water in washing dishes, the newspaper being made to answer every purpose in this respect.

The appetite that each brought to the repast, rendered keen by the long ride in the clear desert air, made it seem a banquet to them, and the feeling

of well-being that it induced acted as a lubricant to their speech.

"Do you see that mountain peak in the opening from this range?" asked Dick of Fillmore, indicating a mountain to the Southward bathed in purplish haze. "That's in Mexico, not so far from the Arizona border, and, some years ago, was the scene of a most desperate encounter between a solitary prospector on the one side, and about a dozen of the savage Yaquis on the other."

"He surrounded them and took them prisoners?" asked White, butting in.

"Not exactly, but for an entire day held them at bay, and outwitted them at the last. He was a daredevil for fair in those days, by all accounts," went on Dick narratively. "I know him well; he was a member of our Camp until recently, and I've often heard him tell the story. There was an old Mexican in Sonora, Don Patricio de Herera, who had a valuable mining claim on this mountain, which was about to lapse owing to nonpayment of taxes. It was a gold proposition, the annual tax for retaining which, is ten dollars for each *pertenencia.* The concession was a large one, comprising many *pertenencias,* and this was only one among several that the Don was holding down. These Mexican Dons always think and act in large figures, and it may be that he was at

times really pressed for money and was unable to meet this payment. The claim, as I have said, was a valuable one, but the Don, indolent and wealthy, had no thought of working it, simply holding on to it from year to year. Well, there was a reckless, daredevil kind of a fellow named Middleton, who had got on to the deal. He knew the Don's carelessness, and had watched the thing, intending to jump the claim as soon as the Don's right had lapsed.

" It was a spirit of bravado and adventure, with a little revenge thrown in, that prompted Middleton as much as anything else in the matter. He had been sweet on the Mexican's daughter, but the old Don would have nothing of him, and sent the girl to a convent in the City of Mexico.

" Middleton watched his chance and, when within a day of the expiration of the claim, went to the Don, taunted him with the statement that the claim had practically lapsed, and that he intended jumping it. He placed his whole reliance on a horse that had few equals in the way of speed and staying qualities. He had made his preparations beforehand, and without stopping to hear the Don's reply, put spurs to his broncho, and rode away.

" But Middleton was not to have so easy a victory as he had supposed. Don Patricio, ordinarily

careless and easy going, could act with decision when occasion required, and he was equal to his emergency in the present instance. Among his vaqueros was one named Enrico, who was a match for Middleton in recklessness and hardihood, with the further advantage of having been bred to the life. He had been given charge of the escort which had conducted the Don's daughter to Nogales, the nearest railroad town, on her journey to the City of Mexico, and Don Patricio knew that he could trust him in anything. Enrico must reach the claim first, and post a notice in his own name. Before Middleton was out of sight the Don had jumped onto one of the ponies, which, saddled and bridled, are to be seen at all hours about the Mexican hacienda, and was off in quest of Enrico. Now, Enrico knew of a short cut which Middleton would not dare take even if he knew of it, owing to a most dangerous ford which was almost impassible on account of quicksands. By the farther route the claim was but a hundred miles distant from the hacienda, and as this could be done in a day at a pinch, he would be sure to take no chances in the matter. In a trip like that, the horse is the key to the situation. Enrico had a broncho which he had reared from a colt, which in intelligence was almost human, and which he felt could be safely pitted against the other's

horse. It transpired that he had made the trip to the claim once before, in the Don's service, taking the short cut over the dangerous ford, on which occasion the broncho had shown a sagacity in working out of the quicksands, worthy of the evil one, as the vaquero afterward told Don Patricio.

"Enrico had his preparations soon made—the Mexican vaquero being almost as hardy and abstemious on occasion as his horse—and rode away confident of victory.

"On the route taken by Middleton—the longer one, as Enrico rightly surmised—there was a water-hole about sixty miles out, which he reached toward evening of the first day. Here he made his camp for the night. He had been keeping a sharp lookout all day for Indians, the Apaches and the Yaquis having always been troublesome in those parts. He was well heeled, and slept with his Winchester at his side, but he passed the night without incident. The approach to the water-hole was through a narrow defile, with almost perpendicular cliffs on each side and was a good strategic point.

"The trouble began while at breakfast, shortly after daylight, when he noticed the Yaquis approaching warily, beyond gunshot. He had plenty of ammunition, and, as they came within range,

let fly at the foremost, disabling his horse. Their horses seemed spent; it looked as if they had come in from a long ride and wanted the water more than anything else, but Middleton could take no chances. As I have said, he kept them at bay all day, wounding several as they came within reach. They could not scale the cliffs, and to go around the mountain so as to attack him from the other side would take half a day, and would be well-nigh impossible in the condition which their horses were in, so he felt reasonably safe while daylight lasted. After that, the tables would be turned on him he well knew."

"How did he get out of it?" asked White, as Dick paused to light another cigar.

"Held them off until nightfall, and then blew up the water-hole."

"Blew it up! How, and why?"

"Prospectors usually carry a few sticks of dynamite as part of their outfit on going into the desert," replied Dick, "so as to enable them, should they make a find, to extend their examination by blasting. Middleton was provided in this respect, and knew that his only chance of escape lay in putting the water-hole out of commission. Many signs pointed indubitably to the fact that his enemies were well-nigh exhausted for want of water. His own horse was fresh, having had a little grazing,

and a sufficiency of water. He knew he would be attacked under cover of the darkness. His only hope was to blow up the water-hole at nightfall and flee. Among the Indians, neither men nor horses would be able to pursue him far without water; his only hope was in effectually destroying the water-hole for the time being and thus render his enemies powerless."

"And did it all pan out as he had planned?" asked White.

"Pretty much so. He was all ready for operations before sundown, and when the time came to leave, lighted his fuse, mounted his horse and dashed away. He knew that the Indians would pursue at once, but he counted on some of them being injured by the explosion, and this would make a diversion. He didn't make more than about ten miles that night. He was worn out by the occurrences of the day, and, on reaching a spot where he felt himself reasonably secure, went into camp for the night."

"And did he reach the claim ahead of the other?"

"When he reached the spot at about noon," said Dick, toying with his cigar, "he found himself looking into the barrel of Enrico's Winchester. Enrico was master of the situation, and made him disarm at once, Middleton taunting

him all the while with having set the Indians on him. This Enrico stoutly denied, and at one time they nearly came to blows over the matter.

"The chivalry of some of these Mexicans, or rather Spaniards, is fantastic. In order to prevent himself from being shot he had been compelled to disarm Middleton, but having rendered him defenseless, would not have harmed him for the world. In fact, when the time was up, and Enrico the rightful owner of the claim, they went back together over the course Middleton had come, apparently the best of friends. When they reached civilization again, Enrico insisted on replacing Middleton's weapons which he had destroyed.

"Middleton might still have had a chance at the claim had he wished to press it. According to the Mexican mining law when two individuals apply simultaneously for the same claim, the matter is decided by lot, and although he knew that Enrico did not have the means to hold down such a concession, but would probably transfer it to the Don for a small consideration, he made no further attempts in the matter. Enrico had treated him white when he had him in his power, and he was not the man to forget such a thing."

"And what about the Yaquis?" asked Fillmore, "and the water-hole? Was that destroyed?"

"It was spoiled for the time being all right," replied Dick. "As for the Indians, no sign of them was to be seen. They may have reached water unknown to Middleton; at all events, the two men saw nothing of them, and got back without incident.

Before mounting, Dick tendered the hospitality of the Summer Camp that was to be, to Fillmore and his friends. "Should any of your party wish to join ours in making a summer camp in California," said he to Fillmore, "it will be all right. Don't you want to come yourself?"

"I'm not sure but I'll go East this summer. Anyhow I'll remain until the heat drives me out. I never make up my mind on any course until I'm compelled to."

"We'll take the evening train out to-night. We'll stop and see you on our return. We can tell then all about the Summer Camp, and perhaps you'll make up your mind to join the party. The more that camp together within certain limits, the better."

"I'll speak to the others about it. No doubt several will want to come," replied Fillmore, and then the party pushed forward again, reaching the city in season to enable them to take a bath before supper.

As the cavalcade turned a corner on the way to

the hotel, the party heard a halloo evidently directed to White from some one coming from an opposite direction. It proved to be an acquaintance whom he had known in Prescott the previous summer. His first inquiry was for Blakeslee. "How's your old partner Blakeslee? I've often thought of you two fellows camping there under the big pine, you got along so well together." A shadow flitted across White's face. The other understood and turned the conversation. But when he parted from him it was with an extra pressure of the hand.

CHAPTER XV

THE sound sleep incidental to nights passed under the stars, gave Branscombe a feeling of vigor and a joy in living, which after all these months was still a novelty to him. The nights brought him accessions of strength. It seemed as if, during the sound sleep which he enjoyed, the spirit drew from some unknown source influx of sanity, of wisdom, which was making another man of him, giving him an altogether better outlook on life. The days severally came to be of importance, "a stately procession to unheard-of music," the nights periods of expansion, growth.

As foreseen by Fillmore, he became so much interested by the success of the casino and bath-house, that he began to consider placing the Camp on a permanent basis. The little he had done hitherto—tentative as it was—held advantages to the others which were so apparent that he found himself taking the keenest interest in planning further conveniences.

A conversation he held with Fillmore and

White, in the latter's tent one evening, helped bring him to a decision in the matter. Fillmore had remarked that Alford would in all probability still be living, and on the road to recovery, had he been placed in a well-organized health camp a year or even six months earlier.

"Alford's death was uncalled for," said he. "From what I can gather of his case, he might have pulled through, or at least have prolonged his life for some years. When I first took his temperature, three months or more before he died, I advised him to go to bed and stay there, telling him that with rest in a recumbent posture for a month or two, the fever might be controlled. In a regular, organized camp, one of the best features is the discipline that is maintained. Had Alford been required to follow instructions the outcome might have been quite otherwise. True, his reason for not doing so was a good enough one. Being alone, he would have no one to do things for him he said. I met this objection, however, by telling him that he could eat half-a-dozen raw eggs a day, which with milk and possibly some of the pre-digested breakfast food, would be nourishment enough. The others would make his purchases and render him such other assistance as was necessary."

"'The others,' said he, 'are sick themselves;

they couldn't be expected to wait on me. They have all they can do to meet their own requirements.' "

" A health camp like the Denver institution is something that is greatly needed here," remarked White. " Not one out of fifty that come here can afford to pay more than twenty-five dollars per month. In most cases, the money has to be earned first by their relatives at home. Managed in a businesslike manner, such an institution can be made almost self-supporting at that price. This, of course, would include medical attendance. In what other field of effort could an original expenditure of a few thousands be made to yield such yearly results? If provision were made for health-seekers so that on arrival they could go right into some well-managed camp—the thinking and planning having already been done for them—a much greater percentage of cures would be effected. The worry that would thereby be averted can hardly be calculated, and this from a class who have enough to endure as it is. What I went through in worrying before I got settled I could not describe, and it could not be understood by any one in health."

" The invalid on arrival, a stranger in a strange land, often sick from the hardships of the journey, is not in physical condition to select a site and make

his camp purchases," affirmed Fillmore. "I came alone; and the difficulties ahead caused me much anxiety even before arrival, as I didn't know what was required. Many, in their exhausted condition, even put up their tents. All this tends against recovery."

"I happen to know," adduced White, "that the worry incidental to selecting a location and buying and furnishing the tent, has injured the invalid in a number of cases. There is an instance of it right in our Camp. Then too, it always costs more than they at first think it will, and in some cases, when all is paid, they are frightened at the depletion of their little capital. This leads them to economize in their food, which of itself is enough to retard recovery, or even make it impossible."

While White was speaking, Branscombe's gaze had rested once or twice on the water-color which Blakeslee had painted for him, and which had been delivered to him by the ranchman. At a pause in the conversation, Branscombe, indicating the picture, which was pinned carelessly to one of the cross-beams of the tent-house, asked:

"That an Arizona scene?" Then, going nearer—"It's very good." He regarded it with the interest which the connoisseur accords a work of talent. "Good composition," was his first

thought. "The mountain's the main feature, the file of savages approaching it at the right as if coming to worship being subsidiary. And there's good balance; it's better not to have put the mountain square in the middle as a lesser man would have done. And the chiaroscuro! What would not the Master have said of it! Outside work, of course—middle afternoon. Nothing of studio landscape about this. And what colorings! How marvelously he has caught momentary effects! The mountains here are as mobile and almost as expressionfull as the human face. What a radiance of light and color! He's an idealist. He's treated it imaginatively; yet I've seen the mountains look like this for a few moments at a time. To have a vision like that and the brain to record it!"

"That ought to be under glass," he finally said, addressing White. "There's good work there. Is it by an American? I don't recognize the signature, B. If you will permit me, I'll have it framed for you."

"All right," agreed White, "and you can hang it in the casino if you like. That'll be my contribution toward the work." He related the circumstances under which the painting had come to him, giving him at the same time, a little of his partner's history.

"Blakeslee," mused Branscombe.

"Sandford Blakeslee," interpolated White. "He was from New York."

"The Sandford Blakeslee I used to know couldn't have done this kind of work," was Branscombe's comment. "It's very singular. I knew most of the artists of any distinction in the East, at least by reputation. It's odd that I should not have heard of him." After a moment's pause he added: "Better let me send it on to Paris to my old master. I think they will be glad to have it on exhibition there."

"If we consider what it costs to build a hospital and keep it going," discoursed Fillmore, taking up the theme again after the little interruption brought about by Blakeslee's picture, "and then remember that the same results can be secured here on the desert at perhaps a quarter of the cost per individual benefited, it would seem to be only a question of time before enough such camps will be instituted, to provide for all who need them. The establishing of hospitals," he went on, "has from medieval times on, been peculiarly the luxury of the wealthy. This modified form of it is within the reach of the well-to-do middle class, and from this class, numerically the strongest, and immeasurably the happiest, should proceed the initiative in the work."

Fillmore had become greatly interested in these sociological subjects, and had given them considerable thought from the inception of the work done by Branscombe at the Camp. As a physician, he saw not only the need of it from the humanitarian point of view of relieving suffering; he went further, realizing that cures could be effected thus, other things being equal, where otherwise only a fatal result could be looked for. He had seen enough right on the grounds where they were of the haphazard methods, or rather want of method that characterized individual effort, to bring home to him his own responsibility in the matter, and he intended, as stated in a previous chapter, to give his services to the Camp when it became a permanent affair, a result which he confidently expected would come to pass with the coming winter.

"When any one succeeds in saving a single life," he continued, "by pulling a person out of the water or from in front of an on-coming trolley car, he performs a feat that is commended by every one; he himself feels that he has done something worthy, something to justify existence. By establishing a health camp he can do this on a larger scale, and it becomes increasingly interesting. It's a work worthy of one's best efforts. The tuberculosis campaign is destined to become a great

national movement in all progressive countries. At present Germany is the only one where the problem is at all adequately met, and the assertion is made there, that the disease will practically be stamped out in their country before the expiration of the first third of this century. Of course, that is Utopian, yet stranger things than this have come to pass. They have no natural advantages in the way of climate or public lands as we have, and they deserve all the more credit for what they are achieving. As a matter of fact, the work can be done better and more economically here in the Southwest than in any other part of the world. There are large tracts of absolutely worthless land here, to which water for domestic purposes can be conveyed in sufficient quantities. Much of this desert land can never be utilized for other purposes, but it makes ideal sites for health camps."

"A right good work has already been done in our Camp," put in White. "How much better the Deacon looks! I begin to think now, that he may pull through."

"He's a very intractable patient though, for such a mild-mannered man," was Branscombe's answer. "He does all sorts of things he oughtn't, and omits doing what he ought half the time."

"And there's no health in him!" said White.

"But he's in much better shape than when he lived alone and did his work," asserted Fillmore.

"I don't think it well for the invalids to do their cooking," remarked White, coming down to a narrow and personal view of the subject. He regarded cooking and camp work in general with the dislike that only the student and scholar, impatient at interruption to his work, is capable of, and he looked with disfavor on all plans of health camps that did not include in their scheme of things a restaurant or table service.

"Diet," he went on, "is as important as pure air. This has been demonstrated again and again by those qualified to speak on the subject. The average lunger don't know how to cook, and don't know what he should eat. It's bad for him too, to wash dishes; he shouldn't put his hands in water more than is necessary. Then again the labor of preparing his meals is often more than he is equal to. He's apt, also, to be too economical."

"One advantage of it, however," averred Branscombe, "is that it gives them something to do; although I agree with you, that they are apt not to do it properly, and to neglect themselves in various ways."

"Tuberculosis has invaded every family in the country," continued Fillmore. "There are direct wires on this question from heart to heart

throughout the populace. The knowledge that it is curable and preventable places an enormous responsibility on thinking people. As Pasteur has said, it is in the power of man to cause all parasitic maladies to disappear from the earth. Tuberculosis will continue to be the scourge it is until adequate measures are taken to stamp it out. We'd come off much easier by tackling the problem efficiently at once. We're paying a heavy price now for our supineness. Relief for the situation is required of us, now that we know the conditions of the disease. The longer we shirk it the bigger the penalty we will have to pay; for pay we must to the uttermost farthing. That over one hundred thousand people die of it annually in this country alone, enduring incredible suffering meanwhile, is because it is permitted to be here. With an organization competent to do battle with it, the disease could be exterminated in one generation. But the task is so large a one that only by concerted action on the part of large bodies of people, with the government in conjunction, can this be brought about.

"Our government ought to take the work in hand," he went on, "just as is done with yellow fever. Tuberculosis is quite as communicable and far more prevalent. The health of the populace is of the first importance. It already now looks

after the consumptives of the army and navy, and it would be a comparatively simple matter to extend the work on the same lines. A few sections of desert land in Arizona and California could be set aside for the purpose. Congress then would be asked to make appropriations, just as is done in the matter of the Indian schools and in the irrigation work. The rest is easy. If every consumptive of small means, or without means, could go to a government camp on becoming aware of his condition, where he could have the best of care, a much larger percentage of cures would be effected, and, what is of far more importance, it would be impossible for him to spread the contagion. There is far more tuberculosis to the square mile in New York or Chicago than right here, with all the conditions there favorable to its development. Living in a lungers' camp as you are, you are really not taking half the chances of the disease that any resident of a big city does; for out here, in this dry pure air of the desert, it is impossible for the disease to propagate itself when simple precautions are taken. In addition the educational part of the work would be vigorously pushed, and definite results would soon be forthcoming. The discipline required in such a health camp would remain with the graduates when they return to their work. There would

be no spitting about as is too often the case now, as each would be on his guard against reinfection."

"It will eventually be brought about," replied White, "that the government will take hold of the matter, but it may take time. Much of the public money is now appropriated to utilitarian ends of less importance to the people as a whole. Consider the money that is spent on rivers and harbors. Necessary as that is, within certain limits I would rather see some of it diverted to the relief of those delicate women encamped along the roadsides here, alone and in poverty, making such a brave fight for life."

"It'll come in due time," agreed Fillmore. "Of course there'll be opposition. Take the irrigation work for instance, certainly a wise and sane measure. It's only a few years since the project was first broached, that it was properly the province of the government to take this in hand, as it had proven to be too big for individual effort. The idea of applying to the government to reclaim these arid lands originated in this valley I am told, but the man who had the temerity to propose it in the first instance was laughed at and ridiculed as a visionary. 'Why,' it was contended, 'should the government concern itself in such a matter? It's surely not the function of the government to

supply the rancher with water. As well lend the miner governmental aid in getting his ore out of the ground.' Another said: 'Don't expect it before the millennium.' It was characterized as chimerical, as socialistic, and the very persons who were to be benefited by it, were the ones to 'knock' it hardest. The following year it was taken up at the Irrigation Congress at San Francisco, where it was knocked again as being too good to be believed in.

"At least the government should look after its employees when incapacitated for work by this disease. Government employees give good, faithful service and in general are not overpaid. This is especially true in the postal service. Many of the business houses throughout the country help out the better class of their employees in a slow, expensive illness of this kind, and surely the government should not be behind its citizens in this respect. This could be done easiest and most effectually by establishing camps for them in the Southwest where they might have every advantage that modern science can offer. This would result in saving many lives.

"It's a reflection on us as a people," continued Fillmore, "that we should be behind Germany in our facilities for attacking the problem. With twice the population and perhaps ten times the

wealth, and with so large a floating population, we ought to do far more than other nations in this respect."

"It won't long be so," predicted White, with difficulty grasping the idea that we are behind any other nation in anything. "We have the best climate, and the money—two great advantages. A good beginning has been made. Most of the Eastern States have at least one sanatorium exclusively for consumptives, where patients are received at a nominal charge—five or six dollars a week, and in no municipality in the world, is the problem handled so comprehensively and effectively as in New York. There are, too, a number of private individuals in various parts of the country, who give the use of their grounds to consumptives, and aid them in other ways. There are many well-disposed people of means, who would probably be glad to take up the work, pending action by the government if they knew the need of it, and could be brought to see what results can be secured along these lines."

The conversation was food for thought to Branscombe for some days following. Not that he hesitated much in the matter. An organized camp, where the best of facilities would be available to health-seekers at a nominal price, had been taking form in his mind, subconsciously, for

months past. It was, in fact, the logical outcome of his mental attitude on that Christmas eve when he heard the tinkle of the guitar in the other tent, and took himself to task at his inability to apperceive the pathos of the pitiful attempts of the boys to celebrate the holiday. He had been advancing toward this, step by step from the time of first carrying the bucket of water for the Deacon, which little act, done on the spur of the moment, had really led up to the purchase of the land and the sinking of the well.

The silent influence of his partner's character, in the comradery and intimacy of camp life, had, too, its bearing on the question, as well as his own efforts put forth to aid in the restoration to health of the other. From the time that he had taken up the task of watching over the Deacon's health in the effort to save his life if possible, his thought, occupied with this subject, led on, insensibly, to a wider view, in which the claims of others as well as his partner, pressed insistently for recognition. Once enlisted, his interest grew steadily though imperceptibly, so that whenever he went to town and saw the listless, apathetic, sad faces of young fellows, health-seekers, chafing against enforced idleness and dependence, hanging about the saloons and gambling places in sheer desperation, or from want of something better to do, all that was noble

or generous in him rose up in revolt at the wrong of permitting such a state of things to continue. The commonest instincts of humanity, he felt, required him to do what he could to get them into a better environment.

Surely if any class in the world needed planning for, it was these invalids who remained in town on account of economy, in cheap, ill-ventilated lodgings, and ate at the common restaurants, where the food was bad, and poorly cooked. They were fighting against such odds—how great they themselves were not aware of. Was ever situation more pathetic than theirs? They had struggled so hard, suffered so much, and this would have to go on in crescendo until vanquished when left to themselves. In general they were but scantily provided with money and were required to pay well for everything they got. It followed that they got but little of those things that were essential to their recovery. How much better off they would be out on the desert in a camp such as he had in mind!

"It's the way they start in," he said to himself. "If they stay in town on coming, it gets to be a habit with them and they think they cannot content themselves anywhere but in town. Those that go to the desert on the start, if within easy distance of a car line, even though brought up in

the city, usually stay and are content. They improve faster and feel better, and this encourages them."

On the social side alone the advantage to them would be incalculable. The comradery that camp life engenders—that is so essentially a part of it, would help dissipate the sense of loneliness and isolation that comes over the invalid when alone, and would supply one of the requisites for regaining health.

And from every other point of view their condition would be greatly improved. For the same outlay which in town procured for them only the scantiest means of existence, ill-ventilated rooms and a regimen wholly inadequate and insufficient to their needs, making recovery next to impossible —for the same outlay, everything necessary to their comfort and restoration to health could be supplied in such a health camp as he had in view.

The next move would be to buy a small ranch, good irrigable land, on which horses, cows and poultry could be kept. He had long contemplated this, desiring to have a comfortable place for the Deacon's wife to come to. He knew of such a place near by, and would complete the purchase without delay. The ranch when in running order would supply the Camp with an abundance of milk

and cream, butter and eggs—in short, a large part of the supplies needed, and at a minimum cost.

He would also buy a tract adjoining the present camp-site, so as to have plenty of room. The tents now on the ground, owned by those occupying them could be taken care of during the summer for the owners, if desired, and would be ready for occupancy in the fall. He would put up a dozen tent-houses during the summer for newcomers and have them comfortably furnished, and would add to them on occasion.

His living expenses out here were nominal compared to what he had been accustomed to. Two months' income would keep him a year; the balance he would use in carrying on the work. By intelligent planning, and the outlay of a few thousands, results could be attained out of all proportion to the cost and an interesting sociological experiment inaugurated, which might have most far-reaching results.

His sense of humor sometimes came to his aid too, in these days, and helped carry the day. It seemed such a delicious bit of pleasantry which he had all to himself—that he, Larrimore Branscombe, well known in the Tenderloin and in the Latin Quarter—that he should be living in a lunger's camp doing relief work; there was something droll, *bizarre*, fantastic about it.

Yet no! *Halte-la!* Not so! The individual that looked back at him from the mirror was an entirely different personage from the Tenderloin habitué, sometime occupant of Cell No. 9 in the Tombs on a charge of manslaughter, who went by that name. He well knew that, should circumstances compel him to again take up his abode in New York (a most unlikely event) those places that saw him once would see him no more. Something other than desire was swaying him now—something other than duty even. Rather, he was living up to a higher expectation of himself. A reversion to type was taking place within him—the Larrimore type. His mother had often commented on the fact that he had the characteristics of his grandfather Larrimore, and used to predict that when he reached middle age he would be much the kind of man she remembered her father to be. Environment had much to do with his mistakes in the past, but the past was now a closed book and it began to look as if his mother's predictions might come true after all.

The most selfish of us—and it is the misfortune of humankind that we are overlaid with selfishness as is the virgin gold by the tundra—the most selfish of us are capable of living nobly in the intervals in which our selfishness is relegated to the background. Many live and die without

knowing the potentialities for good within them, and so, perhaps, miss the best that life has to offer. Happy the mortal from whose eyes the scales have fallen, who has come to a realization of the high possibilities within himself.

CHAPTER XVI

THE secret of keeping young is to live in the future not in the past. It is living in the past that puts wrinkles on the face, dims the eye, blanches the hair, renders unsteady the gait. Living in the future of necessity begets hope. Plans are always a part of the future; regrets belong to the past. The one is for doing, the other for undoing. Hope is rightly pictured as being winged.

Now that Branscombe was living subjectively, the very expression of his face showed the change. The serenity that looked from out his countenance was in marked contrast to the unrest of the old life. Now that he had closed his mind and thought to the past—now that his thoughts dwelt habitually in the future—the result became apparent in his face and bearing, which showed a youthfulness and elasticity, contrasting oddly with his gray-besprinkled hair.

"Padre, why are you so anxious to conceal your identity in the health camp project?" asked the Deacon, coming in on him one morning while at

work on his plans. He was standing at his improvised drawing table, whistling softly to himself, at peace with all the world. When at work he usually kept the curtain down over his screen door, an indication that he was either absent or occupied. The Deacon, however, being a privileged character, usually came and went as he liked.

Branscombe had recently effected the purchase of his ranch, and was busy planning alterations and improvements to adapt it to the new purpose for which it was intended. He had, as a matter of necessity, taken his partner into his confidence, but had asked him to say nothing to the others about it, giving out that the ranch was for his personal use in accordance with plans formed on first coming. They would know the circumstances another winter in any event, but in the interval, it suited him better to keep the matter quiet.

The party from whom the ranch had been purchased was leaving for California, and everything, including live-stock and poultry, went with it. He now found himself in possession of half a dozen cows, several horses, and a few hundred fowls.

"We all do too much talking," responded Branscombe to the Deacon's query, "and in this kind of thing, when there's much talk, it generally ends where it begins—in talk. It's much the best way to go ahead and do things and keep your

mouth shut. One cannot stop others from talking, but one doesn't need to do it oneself. I have noticed," he went on, "that talking about a project, instead of helping it along, generally stops it. My fowls display many of the characteristics of human beings. Often the cackling that is done in the poultry yard on account of a single egg that is laid, is only paralleled by the commotion some people make over their petty achievements."

"That's so," put in White, who appeared in the doorway in time to overhear the last sentence, "but you shouldn't forget that there's another sort of hen which will quietly steal her nest, lay a baker's dozen of eggs, turn them into chickens in due course of time, and immediately go about obtaining a living for them without making any fuss about it whatever."

"I haven't had enough experience with fowls yet to have heard about that kind. I've always lived in big cities, where you never see them until they are stuffed and roasted," replied Branscombe.

"You see, Padre, how easy it is to be mistaken," put in the Deacon. "You've been reasoning from insufficient data, like all people who jump to conclusions."

"You always have data enough when you talk about the weather! Whew! isn't it hot though!

There's nothing problematical about that. And they say that it gets hotter than this in July," offered White, who, in flannel trousers and fishnet shirt, was vainly endeavoring to be comfortable.

The question of where to pass the summer, toyed with all winter, imminent all spring, was indeed becoming imperative. A few of the campers had already left for the East, and some of the others had gone to Prescott, the higher altitude of which rendered the climate more equable. A general exodus seemed about to occur.

Two fellows, Walter Howland and Arthur Wilkinson, had pooled their issues, purchased a team of bronchos and were to start for the hills in a few days. Fillmore had endeavored to dissuade them from the project, on the score of the injury to health which generally resulted when invalids took these trips, but had failed to convince them. He had been giving occasional afternoon talks to the campers and other health-seekers in the vicinity, on the subject of their common ailment, one of which had been devoted to counteracting the tendency of some of the younger men to "hike off to the hills," as they expressed it, with the advent of summer. He had confirmed his own impressions on the subject by data obtained from a well-known physician in town in which specific instances were given of deaths resulting from

the hardships incidental to such a trip in a country like Arizona.

White supplemented him in the effort. "Give it up, Willie," he urged. "Roughing it is not for invalids. To ride over poor roads in the hot sun eight or ten hours a day with the poor fare and the hard beds that you get on the road—it's bound to injure you."

Arthur Wilkinson was a young man of sanguine temperament, red hair, and an almost diaphanous complexion. His chances for recovery were not considered good.

"We're not going to rough it, we'll take it easy."

"You'll have heavy rainstorms to contend with," warned White. "It's a different proposition camping in Arizona in summer than what it is in winter. When you are on the road you can't put up a tent, and there are few trees even to afford shelter. You'll get soaked through many a time. Give it up and go to Southern California with the party from Camp Bowlegs. They'll have things in good shape there."

"If we don't like it, we'll drop it. We've got the team now, and ought to make a try at it after all the talking we've done," rejoined Wilkinson.

"Hot as it is here," persisted White, "you would do better to stay right here than to attempt

such a trip. You need rest. This, in importance, comes next to pure air and diet. In your case absolute rest would be the thing. You ought to lie on your back for a few weeks on account of your temperature. Get rid of that anyway, before starting."

White's protests were of no avail, and it was with foreboding that the others bade them adieu a few days later.

Fillmore, going into town with Branscombe on the morning following his return from Bowlegs, acquainted him with the project of the summer camp in California and of the proposition to participate in it, which greatly interested him, as he foresaw. Branscombe decided that his partner should go at all events, and also intended urging him to have his wife join him there. There would probably not be much for her to do in the way of teaching during the summer, he reflected, at the old home, and since she was to come sooner or later it might much better be at once.

On his return to Camp he sought out the Deacon and broached the subject to him.

"Two of the Bowlegs people," he said, "have gone on to California to look up a site for a summer camp. As soon as this is determined on, they will communicate with us. I think you had better avail yourself of the opportunity."

"I'll see about it," was the Deacon's response. "Shall you be able to go?"

"Not just yet, but I'll come later," he assured him.

The Deacon had not been doing so well of late. The thermometer had begun to show from two to three degrees of temperature each afternoon during the past week. Hitherto it had been normal, at least since he had been living with Branscombe. This periodic rise in temperature, always a grave symptom in the disease, can often be warded off, at least in good part, by absolute rest. At Fillmore's suggestion, he lay down each afternoon, and was told, at the same time, that if it did not abate by the end of the week, it would be advisable for him to keep to his bed entirely for the following two weeks.

"I'd been thinking it might be possible to stick it out here this summer," mused his partner: "I'm comfortable as things go. I've always liked warm weather. Think of the inertia to be overcome, to break up and locate in a new place six or eight hundred miles away among new people."

"It's the piano that attracts you here, I suppose," said Branscombe. "But it will be better for you to take a rest from that too. Get well first! You're living too much on your nerve force.

Go to California and imagine you're taking a vacation."

A wan smile, in derision of himself as much as at his partner's words, was the Deacon's only answer.

"You couldn't stay here all summer," Branscombe admonished. "I've learned that much from the ranchmen here. The temperature that you are running now is due as much to the heat, I think, as to your piano practice. You ought to get away from both. You shouldn't attempt to stay. You can't afford to take the risk. If you stayed here even half the summer, you'd be glad to capitulate and leave then. Better go with the others. The Latimer boys are going and probably one or two more from here."

"How will you stand it?" asked the Deacon.

With a delicacy that had not originally been a part of Branscombe's make-up, he refrained from reminding his partner that he, as a healthy man, might stand with impunity that which would be injurious to the other. "I don't intend staying here throughout the summer," he reminded him. "I'll stand it as long as possible, so as to get the work well under way; then I'll go away for perhaps two months. I shall have to go to Los Angeles anyway to make some purchases, after which I'll come to the summer camp for a while."

After a pause he went on:

"Why don't you have your wife join you in California when you're settled? She can't do much with her music during the summer. Since she intends coming in the fall in any event, she might anticipate it by a few months. The Summer Camp will be pleasant for her, as there will be ladies there. She really ought to go as chaperone, as otherwise there will be no married lady there."

The Deacon had no more objections to offer. "All right," said he, "I'll write her today. It may take her some time to get ready."

"You had better take things quietly in the interval before starting. The others will be ready to go in about two weeks I think. You ought to manage if possible to get rid of your temperature before making the trip. Remember, you will have to spend a night in the sleeping-car, and will be twenty-four hours en route; you ought to be in good trim when you leave.

"From what I understand," continued Branscombe, "it is the purpose of the Bowlegs people to make a permanent Summer Camp there. They intend buying land as soon as they find something suitable. When the purchase is consummated, a piano would not be one of the impossibilities. I believe you will be very comfortable there."

"Yes, but it's a long journey for a few months' stay," grumbled his partner good-naturedly.

"I should think one might find as equable a winter climate in the desert region of Southern California as is to be found in Arizona, and it would only be a short journey to the habitable parts of the country when summer comes."

"The doctors have a theory that the farther you get into the interior, away from the ocean, the better," answered the Deacon.

"That may be all right for tuberculosis while the cure is being made, but in general, the nearer the sea the more vigorous the health of the average individual. Goethe had already observed this, saying that he considered all islanders and inhabitants of the seashore in temperate climes far more productive and possessed of more active force than the people in the interior of large continents."

"My physician was very decided in the matter," rejoined the Deacon. "I brought up the subject of California myself, and he said you would find as many people from the Pacific slope in Arizona, brought there on account of tuberculosis, as from any other part of the country."

"Rather a case of drawing false conclusions from right premises," said Branscombe. "The Pacific slope is of vast extent. While it is no

doubt damp immediately on the coast, this does not apply to the interior valleys of Southern California, which was the section I had in mind. The summer climate of California in general, aside from the desert region, is the finest on earth I am told."

CHAPTER XVII

DICK was essentially a man of action, the anti-type of the dreamer and thinker, and always took time by the forelock. The tendency to postponement, that snare of those who think rather than act, had no part or lot with him. When anything had to be done, the best way was to go straightway and do it. If you desired anything particularly, the obvious thing to do, it seemed to him, was immediately to strive and work toward its attainment. With his faculty of initiative, or rather his power to overcome inertia—this factor which moves the world—it seemed difficult to understand why people should postpone doing things that ought to be done, or having things that seemed desirable to have, as so many did, until their realization became impracticable. "Whilst the water of life is within reach, die not of thirst," said Hafiz, a precept which Dick would heartily have indorsed had it come to his notice. Action, even in little things, was of more importance in his philosophy, than plans and hopes for

heroic enterprises, which may never come to fruition. Since it was the medium through which all achievement comes to pass, action became to him the highest virtue.

When a realization of his disease first came on him, Dick spent no time in bewailing it. He took a thorough survey of the situation and then laid a comprehensive plan to meet it. Fortunately he had sufficient funds to enable him to enter a sanatorium, which he did at once, realizing that a week of treatment on the start is equal to months of it afterward, when the disease has been allowed to establish a foothold. Here he was a most tractable patient except that he could not rest content until he had read up thoroughly the subject pertaining to his disease. The importance of alimentation had not at that time received the attention that it now does, but, reasoning by analogy, he made his inferences, and studied dietetics, which enabled him to keep his stomach in good condition. The correctness of his position was demonstrated by the record which he established; he made the most satisfactory progress of any patient there, and was, so to speak, at the head of his class while he remained. On leaving the institution, he did not take his chances of city life, as many another would have done under the circumstances, but proceeded at once to Arizona, where he had re-

mained ever since, except for an outing in California the previous summer.

"What do you think of the region around Bakersfield?" asked the physician, as he and Dick were discussing the topic of the Summer Camp while speeding westward.

"Rather warm, I should say."

"We might stop off there for a day or two if you like."

"It's got so late in the season that we'll have to economize time as much as possible," reminded Dick. "We ought to make our selection within a week at least from the time we leave the train."

"The foothill country; wonder if that would answer," mused Myers.

"It has its advantages," replied Dick. "There's a fine section about a day's ride from Fresno—the Kings River country. There are ideal places here for our purpose, but I didn't want to go so far. I liked the wheat country in the San Joaquin Valley, too, but that's about as far, and I suppose would be considered too hot. It did not seem so to us, while driving through it, however. All in all, the foothill country would probably be the best, take it the summer through."

"My experience of California is confined to Los Angeles and San Diego, and that only in

winter. I'm not of much use in this part of the work."

"The wheat fields make a beautiful environment," said Dick. "Seldom will one see anything in nature that appeals so to one's sense of the beautiful. The prevailing tone is the yellow of the waving grain or stubble. Sprinkled all about on this yellow groundwork is the dark green of the live-oaks, while above is the intense blue of the sky. There is usually some breeze, and the polished leaves of the live-oaks glisten in the sun like prisms.

"Bowlegs is at an altitude of about two thousand feet," he continued, "which would seem to be a reason for locating the Summer Camp somewhere near sea-level, so as to give them a more radical change of air."

"You say there is no rain or dew in summer in these interior valleys. With a good hot sun above, it would be sure to be dry enough anywhere, one would think," said Myers. After a pause he continued: "If we could find an unoccupied ranch-house, it would be just the thing. There would be shade trees about and also a well, and the house would come in handy for cooking. Such a place could be rented for the summer, and if the region were found satisfactory, the purchase could be consummated later."

"We saw a number of such places last summer, while on the Yosemite trip," replied Dick. "There had been some dry years previously, and, where irrigation was not practicable, the owners, becoming discouraged, had left. We camped overnight at such places several times; we were always sure of water and generally fruit."

"Just the thing," affirmed the physician.

"I remember one such place in particular," continued Dick, "but it was pretty far north, well on toward Stockton. An old man lived there all alone, acting as caretaker of the place. He did some gardening and kept chickens. He made us welcome and gave us all the figs we wanted for the picking. There was also plenty of peaches and plums. The house didn't amount to much, but it was just embowered in fruit trees."

"A summer camp in such a place," said Myers, "would be like the monks of Thélemè."

Dick had never heard of the monks of Thélemè, so he held his peace.

"Had you a tent on your trip last summer?"

"We had one, but didn't use it," replied Dick. "We made our camp wherever night overtook us, or rather, wherever we could get water. We generally retired early, getting out our sleeping-bags soon after the evening meal was over. We slept so soundly while on the trip that we

were always glad when sleep-time came around again."

"How were the nights? Were they ever too warm in the valley?"

"Not that I remember. The difficulty in general was to be warm enough. We always slept on the ground. We entered the Yosemite Valley by the southerly or Wawona route," he went on narratively, "camping overnight at Wawona. This is pretty well up into the mountains, and it was cold at night, colder than we liked. It's cold in the Yosemite Valley, too. The floor of the valley is four thousand feet above sea-level, and is surrounded by snow-capped mountains. It's sure to be cold at night under such conditions. We didn't suffer from the cold while in the valley, as we had plenty of firewood, and made large camp-fires each night. We kept early hours when on the road, as I have said, but not while we were in the Yosemite Valley; the camp-fire was too enticing. We used to sit about it, telling stories, discussing the trip or speculating on the route to be taken when leaving the valley. Sometimes other campers would visit us for an hour or two, attracted by the blaze. When we left the valley it was by way of the Big Oak Flat route, a hard road. We camped the first night on the rim, eight thousand feet above sea-level, with snow all about

us, as it was early in the season. In the East this kind of thing would have been considered a great hardship, but we didn't mind it."

"You were taking chances of a setback, don't you think?" asked the doctor.

"No, I'd been living in the open air nearly two years before and was immune to anything of that kind," replied Dick. "I was as well then as I ever had been, and had been accepted for life insurance just before."

"I think I should like to try the region east of Bakersfield," declared Dick, after a short pause, "making that town a base of supplies. The Kern River country is within a day's drive of there. It is foothill country, and I believe a good ranching section. Five or six hundred feet above sea-level will do no harm. We ought to be near a good ranch country. We'd better leave the train at Bakersfield."

On arriving there, they proceeded at once to a sale stable in quest of a horse and buggy. Dick had a good eye for a horse, and was not easily suited, as the outfit to be purchased now was to be retained for the use of the campers during the summer. After trying several, he finally made his selection, but it used up the better part of the first day, so they decided to remain in town overnight and make an early start in the morning.

They brought their sleeping-bags with them and a small camping outfit.

"It will be fine to make a permanent thing of this Summer Camp," began Myers, when they were under way the following morning; "extending its privileges to others outside our own circle."

"We must have a ranch in connection, where we can raise walnuts as well as fruits," said the practical Dick. "We ought to produce all the fruits, both fresh and dried, as well as vegetables, that we shall require for the Camp. Of course the milk, eggs and poultry needed should come from our ranch.

"Such a ranch," continued Dick, "might be made in a measure self-supporting; the graduates could remain on it all the year through and help carry it on. Only the hardest work would have to be hired. The amount spent for walnuts, eggs and other food supplies that can be produced on a ranch, and which are required in a health camp is considerable."

A ranch which seemed promising was finally found a few miles out from Belleair, the terminus of a short railroad going into Bakersfield. It was within an hour's run to town. There was a small house, and plenty of fruit such as figs, prunes, peaches and grapes. Walnut trees too were scattered about, but as the nuts would not ripen until

nearly the time for leaving the Camp, not much benefit would be derived from them the first season. There was also a good well of water.

Dick planned to have a porch constructed abutting onto the house, the roof of which was to be utilized by the ladies for sleeping purposes. Access to it was to be had from the attic of the house. It was to be of generous dimensions, and the floor below would be used as a dining-room. Trees screened it from the road, and on the upper part, where they were to sleep, spring roller-curtains were to be hung a few feet above the railing, which could be fastened down in case this was desired. The attic would serve as a dressing-room. The kitchen was put in good shape and a Chinaman engaged to do the cooking. A kitchen tent was also to be put up, to enable the ladies to do some of the cooking, should they desire to do so. Nothing was to be done to the interior of the house. With the rooms unfurnished, there would be no temptation to remain indoors.

The use of the place was obtained rent-free for the summer, in consideration of the repairs and improvements to be made there. If satisfied with the location, the purchase was to be effected before leaving on their return to Arizona in the fall.

As soon as the location had been determined on, Dick wrote for the party to come on. Camp

fittings of all kinds were to be had in Bakersfield and he felt sure he could have everything in readiness by the time they should arrive. In all that he did, in every plan formed for the comfort of the party, Dick had the stimulus of Nancy's picture dancing before his mental vision, and he achieved wonders in the short time at his disposal.

Immediately on receipt of Dick's letter at Bowlegs, preparations for the exodus began. The visitors had been happy there, it seemed to them on reviewing the circumstances of the past months. At least there had been peace of mind,—which, for an invalid, is the equivalent of happiness. The circumstances under which they now lived, and the improvement in health that each had made, conduced toward hopefulness. Although some had periods of loneliness and homesickness at first, these were soon dispelled by the kindly attentions of the miners, their hosts, who seemed to make the comfort of their guests their first thought. They had settled into a rut and were content. Now they were to try new scenes, and misgivings as to the outcome assailed some of them at the prospect.

On account of the heat it was decided to make the wagon trip to town by night, as is the custom in Arizona in summer. They left the Camp at nine o'clock, Berkely and Fullerton leading the way on horseback, the ladies following in a wagon.

The recent showers had laid the dust to some extent, and made the roadbed harder. There was a down grade for the most part, and they counted on making the trip in comparative comfort. They were to ride until three o'clock or until the moon went down, upon which they would make a camp until daylight. Although the stars would give enough light to enable these practiced men to find the way, it was deemed best to lay to for the short interval until daylight, to enable the ladies to get rest and refreshment.

Occasionally Berkely or Fullerton would spur on ahead for the purpose of setting fire to the thorns of the giant saguaro, the dryness of which caused the blaze to completely envelop the huge cactus for a few moments. Or they would make a bon-fire of a patch of greasewood, the resin-coated leaves and twigs of which lent themselves readily for this purpose. A brilliant moon threw objects into strange half-lights, now revealing a belated blossom on the crest of the giant saguaro, or shimmering through the needlelike foliage of the other desert growth. Delicate odors from blossoming plants were wafted to them at intervals. An unreal, mystical quality pervaded the landscape as if the genii were in possession. Many a mesa on the way seemed enchanted under the spell of the desert night!

To these desert sojourners, the splendor of the night was no novelty, but it would never get to be an old story either. The phenomena of Nature often become one of the resources of the invalid, whose sole hope rests on an outdoor life. They were silent for the most part, each under the spell of thought that comes when old scenes and conditions are being left behind, and new ones entered on.

The thoughts of each were busy with the incidents of their stay while at Bowlegs. Nancy's were not so entirely centered on Dick and the twenty-page letter he had written as to prevent them from roving to other subjects—to the silent devotion of the " boys " which had been expressed in numberless little acts of goodwill, not alone to her but to her companions as well, but which she had appropriated almost unconsciously.

She dwelt too on the agreeable fact of her improved health and all that it meant to her. This brought her thoughts to Dick again, from which they glanced off to a consideration of her trousseau. After her marriage she would live in town a good part of the time, she hoped; the desert was well enough for a while, but she would have quite enough of it by the time her cure was effected.

Less agreeable were the thoughts of one of her companions, Miss Travis. The Camp had been

a haven of rest to her, and it was with reluctance, amounting almost to a superstition, that she found herself leaving it. She had been a schoolmistress in Chicago with a widowed mother to support. She had added to her income by giving lessons to adults in her spare time, and this burning of the candle at both ends had the usual result, her health giving way at last under the strain.

When unable to work longer the little home had to be broken up. With a portion of the proceeds from the sale of her household effects she secured a shelter for her mother, who was old and infirm, in a "Home." With the remainder, she felt free to go to Arizona, trusting that her money would last until her health was so far recovered as to enable her to take up her vocation as teacher again. She had secured board at a ranch, and with the utmost economy, had managed to make her money last nearly to the time when the opportunity of going to Bowlegs was offered her.

But the interval—that time of anxiety, of need, in which she saw her health slipping away again owing to insufficient food and worry—it made her sick with dread to think of it. She had not known where to turn or how to extricate herself from the difficulties by which she was surrounded. Positions as teachers were given out only from the beginning of the term, as she well knew, but she

had hoped to have a chance to act as substitute, and was waiting in town in a furnished room for this, when the other issue presented itself.

The miners would never know—could never divine from what abysmal depths of suffering they had rescued her. The respectful deference, the rough courtesy, the silent homage which characterized their demeanor toward her had made them seem almost godlike. In her imagination they were vikings, these strong, efficient men, who had made the earth yield up her secrets, and who seemed so unconscious of the importance of their achievement. In her chaste, reserved way she worshipped them all for the splendid qualities she attributed to them.

In especial, she remembered Fullerton's thoughtfulness in offering his services in the way of making purchases for her whenever he had occasion to go to town. How well-disposed he was! What native kindliness! She had never thought that men could be like this! She felt it a hardship to leave the Camp where she had met with such kindness. She had associated very little with men in the thirty-two years of her existence, having early settled down to the life of an old maid. It was new and passing strange to her, the attitude of these men toward women. She had never thought that men were of this sort. In her prejudices against

them, carefully implanted and inculcated by her mother, whose own marriage had not been a happy one, she had hitherto been fairly content, but now she began to perceive that she had reasoned from insufficient data, and sometimes felt that she had missed the best in life in so withdrawing herself from their society. All the feminine instincts, love of the home, the desire to beautify and enrich another's life, the inclination of the unselfish feminine nature to make sacrifices for others, began to assert themselves in the benignant atmosphere in which she had been living.

The improvement in her health had been pronounced while at Bowlegs. The pure, dry air, the healthful diet, the freedom from anxiety—all contributed to this result. Should she make like progress during the summer, she felt that it would be possible to take up her work again in the autumn, but the prospect was not a pleasant one, she reflected, while she blushed at the thought, and chided herself for thinking so much on these subjects. The position of teacher had been conditionally promised her, and Dick, importuned thereto by Miss Berkely, was to attend to the matter of securing it for her in her absence.

The night wore on. The sky was cloudless and thickly studded with stars. The temperature was perfect. The travelers had slept a few hours in

the afternoon, and were in good mood to enjoy the trip and the novel conditions under which it was being made. When the moon had set, a little after three, and they made their temporary camp, it was as if the last scene of a drama had been enacted. The remainder of the journey, made in daylight, and through level ranch country for the most part, would be commonplace in comparison.

Some of the boys, on returning from a previous trip to town, had cached some firewood at this point, in anticipation of the camp being made here. When within a few miles of it, Fullerton pushed on ahead, and when the party arrived, they were cheered with a camp-fire of mesquite wood. Coffee was also in readiness, he having brought his canteen and a coffee-pot at the saddle-bow.

The travelers brought their blankets in the wagon; they would be needed at the Summer Camp, and would come in handy on the trip. When the repast was finished, they wrapped up and disposed themselves about the camp-fire, Fullerton and Berkely entertaining them with stories of mining adventures, until it was time to make another start.

They reached town in good season, and, as there was no train out until evening, the party went to a hotel for the day. Berkely intended going to California with the party, while Fuller-

ton, after spending a day or two with White, was to return to Bowlegs. It was, too, a part of his mission to notify the Deacon of the arrival of the others, so that he could proceed with them, White having written to Bowlegs of the Deacon's intention of summering with them.

When Fullerton reached the Camp he found White busy with his writing. After the greetings had been exchanged, and the message given the Deacon, he asked him about the novel.

"I've abandoned it," White informed him. "I began to find that I had bitten off more than I could chew! I'm not in physical trim for any long-continued effort. I have, instead, been trying my hand at a short story, and find this quite enough. Thought, as has been said, is produced by blood pressure on the brain, and I can well believe it. The more concentrated the thinking, the greater the flow of blood to the brain, and the stomach is thereby robbed. A lunger has to consider his digestion. Superalimentation and nutrition play an important part in recovery. As it is, I am at present able to eat only about one-half the amount I ordinarily do and it's on account of this story. Any concentration is bad for an invalid. It takes too much out of one."

"Shall you stay here this summer?"

"For a while longer, anyway. The story's

about done, but it seems as if it would never be finished. I'm unable to present it as it stood out in my imagination when I first conceived it. There's a something which I aim for, but do not attain. It eludes me. I keep adding to it in the way of interlineations, which makes it necessary to blue-pencil other parts. Then the page looks like a hieroglyphic, and has to be re-written. And it's telling on me. I'm running a little temperature."

"You'll try to tell me next that it's as hard as mining."

"Man, it's like boiler-making. You just have to keep hammering. It isn't so much talent that makes the writer; it's just hammering. Of course he must have ability—some natural talent and inclination, but this won't help him much unless he wants to work, work harder than a farmer or a shoemaker. It's so in all creative work, I fancy," continued White, launched on a hobby, unmindful whether his auditor understood him. "The writer may be the scribe of all nature, as Thoreau averred, but so is the sculptor, or the painter, or the musician, and it's not an easy job for any of them. Good work isn't to be done easily. The race is to the strong, not to the swift."

White loved flowing periods and well-rounded sentences. He had been working them off on Fill-

more all along, and was glad now to have another auditor.

"But it's interesting; man, it's interesting, this kind of work," he continued. "If it were twice as hard I'd still want to keep at it! The greatest pleasure of any worker doing work worthy the name, is in his work, but it's a pleasure he don't get cheaply. He pays for it with his life-blood."

"This man Thoreau was a naturalist, or rather a nature-worshipper, wasn't he?" mused Fullerton.

White mentally approved the distinction, and nodded affirmatively. He waited for the other to go on. Fullerton had, on several occasions, surprised him with his side-lights on literature, and White, with the instinct of the journalist, restrained his own inclination to talk, so as to give his companion a chance, seeing that it was a case where the compensation exceeded the sacrifice.

"I'd read portions of his journals in the magazines, and was so much interested that I ordered his works. Now that I'm stationary and better fixed financially, I'm collecting a little library. The nature-books that are now flooding the market seem to be mostly an imitation of Thoreau, and it seems to me he drew his inspiration from the classics. One would think from some of these later books, that nature-study was an invention that

came in with the twentieth century; he shows that the Greeks and Romans gave the first impulse toward it."

The life of solitude peculiar to men situated like Fullerton fosters a habit of reading, which in turn engenders thought. Their isolation gives them the time not only to take in thoughts, but to digest them. They deal with elemental things. It was the shepherds on the slopes of Chaldea who inaugurated astronomy.

"Yes," agreed White, "this Nature, which is so be-praised and be-written as if it were a new invention or discovery, has from earliest times on inspired those a little above the common herd."

"But Thoreau went further, didn't he?" ventured Fullerton tentatively. "He was the first, wasn't he, to take the rights of animals into consideration? He even gave up fishing, saying it was always accompanied by some loss of self-respect."

"And he never used a gun," agreed White sententiously.

"If he'd lived in Arizona in the early days, he'd had to learn to shoot straight with a quick aim like any other, you bet!" rejoined Fullerton, lapsing back to more simple things, and speaking from a personal knowledge of his subject.

He had brought his blankets, intending to re-

main a day or two, and readily made himself at home in the Camp. As stated, most of the others had already left, dispersing to their homes, or in quest of a cooler clime. Branscombe and his partner were in town, the latter intending to leave on the night train for California, with the party from Bowlegs, so that the Camp was almost deserted.

The noonday meal had been eaten, and White and his companion, sitting under the shade of the cottonwoods, to which spot the other tents had been moved, following Branscombe's example, resumed their conversation of the morning. The miner, laying in store of entertainment against the summer, began:

"You haven't told me about your short story. What's it about?"

"I'll read it to you if you like," offered White. "It's about my partner with whom I made the trip to Prescott last summer."

For answer, the miner settled himself more comfortably in the easy chair, and puffed away at his after-dinner cigar. White, seating himself near his companion, began the story of Blakeslee; but this will take us into another chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE amethystine bulk of San Antony, looming up out of the plains on the Arizona desert beholds much of human emotion, of the joys and sorrows of life, of the loneliness and homesickness inseparable to an invalid's life in a strange country, for under its shadow, many an invalid having journeyed from afar, seeks shelter and restoration to health. With its constant invitation it beguiles many an otherwise weary hour for such of the sojourners having eyes to see, holding out hope or giving back consolation in return for the sadness it so often beholds.

The element of beauty is always present in Arizona, although it requires the discerning eye to perceive it. Every day the bright sun floods the plains with a radiance as of summer. The level floor of the desert, be-sprinkled with mesquite trees, is spangled between the clusters of dry sagebrush with delicate flowers already in February. On every side the horizon is bounded by the sharply serrated outlines of encircling mountains bare to

the summit except for the giant saguaro and an occasional patch of greasewood.

But for these mountains, Blakeslee sometimes thought, during the first month of his tarrying on the desert, life here would be well-nigh impossible. Encircling his horizon, they seemed omnipresent; on the darkest nights he could perceive their huge outlines, blackly looming up in the dim light of the stars. Not an hour of the day but that they seemed to take on new and variant phases which charmed him. Beauty pervaded them, mystery lurked in their fastnesses, and he often sought to conquer their distances by the aid of his field-glass. They excited his interest and imagination as nothing had done since his sickness had come upon him. With his artist's sensibilities, alive to all the gradations of their panoramic effects, they proved to be his best resource. It was even chances that he was ever to get away from this valley again, and he made the most of them. They invited and challenged him to come to them if he could, and he always intended responding, should he ever get back his strength.

He often mused of the period now past, when the Pimas and Navajoes were in possession, hunting and camping under their shadow; of the time when their retreat was invaded by the missionaries; simple, God-fearing men, who went forth into the

vast unknown at the bidding of the Inner Voice, enduring incredible dangers and hardships, doing and daring so much, achieving, alas! so little, and that little even, to be so soon obliterated. Somehow it was a consolation to him, the reflection that nothing whatever remained for all their trouble. "Like my own case," he sometimes thought, but without bitterness, impersonally.

To the east lies the Superstition range—name pregnant with meaning, eloquent of the prospector's mind and thought, embodiment of the cumulative fears and dangers of his life. Blakeslee's fancy often pictured the tales he had heard of the solitary prospector penetrating these fastnesses, never to emerge, dying of thirst and loneliness, all at the lure of gold or adventure. Or his gaze would traverse the range that lies in the way of the Verde country to the northeast—land of promise where he hoped to spend the coming summer. His imagination always pictured it a region of pine trees and running water, with herds of sheep and cattle and prosperous ranches.

On the days when no letters came, when but one or two human beings appeared on his horizon —and there were enough such days—Blakeslee was sometimes overwhelmed with the bootlessness of the struggle he was making, and the temptation to let himself go—to give up the unequal

combat, would loom up big within him. Then perchance, his gaze would take in the mountains, and looking up into their transfigured heights, he would lose himself in simple wonderment at their everchanging hues, at the majesty in which they were clothed, and somewhat of their serenity, their infinite calm, would be imparted to him. Abashed, he would take up the burden again, feeling in some way that access of strength had come to him, that after all, life was worth the effort to save it.

Life! This congeries of contradictions, "this chopping sea of circumstance," in which he was fairly put to it to learn how to trim his sails to escape the peril ahead. Yet how he clung to it, although the passing months were bringing resignation with them. Always he must refrain from doing that which he would like to do. Exercise, action, work—the very things that promote and preserve the health of the healthy individual, were denied the consumptive. Life now was barren of results, a complete reversal of that which he had always desired and which was natural to him; yet he wanted it even on these terms.

Work! Panacea for every ill—that he should be denied this! of all his privations, this was the hardest to bear up under. He never realized while in health what a resource it is, the dignity that attaches to it, the permanent results of it. How

this erstwhile dandified young gentleman with his dress-suit still in his trunk, envied the ranchman, with his herds of cattle, his alfalfa fields, his orchards and stands of bees! The world as exemplified in the old city life were well lost for this.

As for him, all that was left now was to play a waiting game. Life was indeed reduced to its lowest terms; yet even thus he passionately craved it. There were potentialities within him seeking expression that must have an outlet. Only another opportunity and what would he not do with it! Only some years of moderate health—he laid no heavy demands on fate—he knew he would never get to be old—only a little more time in which to achieve something definite before passing out forever into that void that yawned before him!

His body ached all over. He had become used to feeling tired, but his muscles ached more than usual to-day; that last box of oranges was too heavy; it would have been better, he reflected, to have left it on the bench, instead of carrying it to the pile. Life now called for the nicest adjustments, the most delicate balancing of cause and effect, and with it all, he made mistakes. He had never previously been self-centered, but now every act had to be weighed and carefully adjusted to his powers of endurance. Never did human being require wisdom for the conduct of life, as does the

consumptive. Infinite patience, too, and often resignation, all of which come in due order.

He went into his tent and broke some eggs into a glass with lemon juice and swallowed them. It was close onto noon and he ought to have prepared a more hearty repast, but he must first wash his gray flannel shirt. He kept but the one in use, which, when washed at noon and hung up in the dry air of the desert, would be fit to put on again within the hour. There was an irrigation ditch near by from which he obtained most of the water he required. It ran full only once or twice each week, on which occasions he would fill his barrel, making this last until the water came again. For table use and for cooking, the well at the ranch-house supplied his needs, but it was a long carry, and carrying and lifting were bad for him.

He lived alone on the desert some miles from the city. A daily stage passed near his camp bringing him his supplies and mail. The camp was located on the edge of an orange grove, the owner of which gave him occasional jobs at picking and packing the fruit. The fate common to so many consumptives was his—to be without money as well as health. His life was one of Spartan-like simplicity. On rising, he lit his fire of mesquite wood in the cook stove, and as soon as the interior was warm enough, took his cold bath. He never

rose until the sun was an hour or two high, depending on it to help warm his tent. By the time he was dressed, the water in the teakettle was boiling and he would make his coffee, grinding it each morning as he needed it, the coffee-mill being fastened to a post outside his tent. Oranges, toast and chops or eggs completed his breakfast. He would then take his blankets apart, hanging them in the sun over bars put up for the purpose. By this time it was usually warm enough outside in the sun to sit down and write a letter or two. Then the stage-driver was to be intercepted on his way to town, who was to post his letters and fill orders for supplies. If he felt well enough, an hour or two of work in the orange grove followed.

The joy of working, of potency, of forgetting for an hour his illness; this, as much as the pittance he earned thereby kept him at it, and was, indeed, what had brought him to the desert. He knew it injured him; after an hour or two of it his muscles ached, his pulses throbbed, it took him hours to recover his normal condition. The little that he earned thereby had its bearing on the question, however. The demands of his diet, the superalimentation necessary in this disease was no inconsiderable item of expense, but it was only one among several. His tent-house, blankets, furniture and cooking outfit had made serious inroads on his

little hoard. As he saw it dwindling, the money question loomed up big within him, and he began to practise economies undreamed of in the old days of health and income. He often thought that if he did not have this to reckon with, that if he had sufficient means to tide him over for a year or two, so that all worry on this score could be eliminated, he would have a good chance for recovery.

On resigning his position in the big Eastern city, Blakeslee's firm had given him six months' salary, with the promise that this would be duplicated at the end of this period should he still be unable to work. With this sum he felt himself justified in leaving for Arizona. This was his second winter here, and he had not made the progress toward recovery that he had expected. He had not tackled the question rightly, he reflected. He had lost valuable time that first winter. Had he gone right out onto the desert and camped, how different the issue might have been. But he was not prepared for such radical measures on the start, and remained in town. City life, even in the Southwest, is not the best thing in the world for the consumptive, and is expensive too, as he found out by spring.

Instances are common in Arizona of consumptives being cured; of people who had come there years before in bad condition, now going about

their daily avocations looking and acting very much as if they had never been ill. Blakeslee knew of a dozen such cases himself. That the prognosis so far, in his own case, was not a favorable one, he also knew, and he began to see that he would have to set all his store of wits to work, in order to baffle the enemy that had fastened itself on him. But to win out in this game calls for a fortuitous combination of circumstances not vouchsafed to many. The key to the situation is money, but much else is needed.

In the free and easy life of the Southwest, acquaintances are easily formed, especially among the invalids. With the approach of summer, Blakeslee had joined issues with another, and together they purchased a team of Indian ponies and a wagon, with the project of journeying north by easy stages to Montezuma's Wells and the Grand Cañon. Their camping equipment consisted of a tent and blankets, as well as a few necessary cooking utensils, and a sheet-iron stove.

By the time they reached Prescott, however, they had enough of roughing it, so they sold their team, which had stood the journey much better than they, and went into camp in the outskirts of the city. While it was cooler here, this was more than offset by the altitude, which had the effect on Blakeslee of making him nervous, a complication

that often intervenes in these dry, stimulating climates.

On his return in October, he located himself on a strip of desert land near town and the car line. He was fairly content here, but as the season advanced, others came, water became scarce, and it seemed advisable to look up other quarters.

He now sought advice from a ranchman whom he met in town as to a camping place on the desert. The ranchman had an orange grove (desert and garden alternate in Arizona), and proposed to him that he come out to his ranch as he wanted some one about the place during his absence. It ended by the removal of his menage out near the mountains, the tent-house having been transported bodily on a hay wagon.

He had not intended locating here alone, but his companion, with whom he had spent the summer, and who had planned to come with him, failed him when it came to the point, so he came alone. The life seemed doubly lonely after the enforced intimacy resulting from his camping experiences of the previous months, but he made the best of it, thinking grimly that it was only for a time anyway, that either he would get better and be able to go to work again, or—there was always that other alternative to confront him:

Acting bravely a silent and desperate part.

Yes! That was the part he was cast for. Story's lines often came to him in these first weeks on the desert:

Who strove and who failed.

It might be his part to fail too. Well, he would meet his fate like a man. That is the way of the consumptive, acting his part, always acting it, but always bravely, and being silent over it. Face it yourself but conceal it from others, lest they tire of you! and you need them so much! It is indeed a silent and desperate part he is called on to act, and he often acts it so well as to deceive even those dearest to him. To look on death with unflinching eye, to see it steadily advancing on you, and to go about with your hands in your pockets, whistling, as some of them do when others are about,—here is self-control, fortitude, bravery,—of a sort than which there is nothing on earth greater.

The weary and broken in heart.

How well the lines fitted his case! The Hymn of the Conquered. Weary and broken in heart he often was, but not conquered. He would keep on acting the part, acting it bravely, since it is one of the conditions imposed by the disease. And whatever came, he would meet it like a man. No whining.

In the intimacy engendered by the camp life of the past summer, the two companions occasionally dropped the mask,—stopped acting for a little while, coming down to hard-pan facts as regarded their chances of recovery, but only for a short time. Always the old reserve was tacitly resumed the next day. Each saw into the other's heart and soul,—each knew that the other knew that both were acting their part, but it was kept up just the same as being the right thing to do under the circumstances. They even essayed familiarities, in mining camp style, his companion sometimes addressing him as " Pinky," after finding his card,

MR. SANDFORD PINKERTON BLAKESLEE

and this was acting a part too. They often essayed humor, even when not in the mood for it. Knowing the importance of keeping up their spirits they aimed at an optimistic point of view in the face of most discouraging circumstances. When their letters came regularly, and were perhaps of a more satisfactory nature than ordinary, they felt themselves justified in playing pranks even.

The liberality of his employers gave him a fighting chance. Without it, he might as well have received his death-sentence; but his money was now three-fourths spent, and his physical condition

no better. He must make every dollar count hereafter. If the balance still left him could be made to suffice for another year, he looked forward to having his strength so far restored as to enable him to do some light work. If it gave out before, he well knew the outcome, it meant defeat, death.

The silence and solitude of the desert made him introspective; he arraigned himself—his old life rose up in judgment before him as he came to realize the part he had hitherto played in it, the toy he had made of it. He thought with contempt of the dress-suit in his trunk, and the patent-leather shoes, and the shirts with cuffs attached. Cuffs! The ranchman better understood the conduct of life. He knew better than to give his attention to superfluities and lack necessities. His gray flannel shirt and corduroy trousers were worth a trunkful of such truck, he thought. The folly of bringing them to Arizona! It was on a par with the other follies of the old city life—of the dances, and late suppers, and the foolish talk of which the dress-suit was but the fitting concomitant. Thus he sounded the gamut of the emotions, and wore himself out in the process.

Night brought him his compensations. Though the days were filled with unrest, the nights brought him serenity and calm. The short interval between

supper and bedtime, usually given up to a story or two from the magazines, was always marked by a quiet enjoyment which fittingly preceded the night's rest, and was a kind of preparation for it. The pure cold air of the winter nights conduced to sound sleep, and the regenerative processes brought about thereby were apparent in mind and body, bringing accessions of strength to each. He always felt nearest to contentment when preparing for sleep, and most hopeful on rising in the morning.

Sleep, for some years before coming to Arizona, had been to him a coy mistress, who had never distributed her favors lightly, who had ever to be wooed by ingenious devices, and sometimes in spite of all, had to be compelled by the use of drugs. On the desert he was able to sleep soundly throughout the night, and it meant much to him.

In the early stages of his disease, before he could summon resolution to break with the old life, resign his position and the assured income that went with it, leave all his old associations and go among strangers, the nights were dreaded by him. Struggling slowly back to consciousness from dream-life on those bleak November nights and gray mornings, the full realization of his plight would come on him suddenly at the last and with overwhelming force; it was like a knife-thrust in his vitals.



Toyed with the fancy that the genii had awakened him with the purpose of showing him the beauty of the desert night.

It was never so bad during the day as he could reason the matter out with himself philosophically then.

How well he remembered those nights now! The sharp pain on emerging from the subjective state where all was yet well, back into consciousness and a life where all was now ill with him. He would cower with apprehension at such times, and often thought this was harder to endure than the death he was seeking to escape.

His cot was placed on a platform outside his tent with only the stars overhead, the absence of dew making this mode of sleeping entirely feasible. Sometimes he would waken about midnight or a little later, and the splendid pageantry of the heavens all about him made the awakening seem a privilege. He sometimes toyed with the fancy that the genii had awakened him with the express purpose of showing him the beauty of the desert night, a beauty baffling description, and which alone, it seemed to him, was worth the journey hither.

The clear desert air seemed to bring the stars nearer. There were so many of them—the firmament seemed so vibrant with life that his loneliness and sense of isolation fell away from him in their companionship. He came to feel himself one with Nature, brother to the coyote whose querulous

bark sometimes broke the solemn stillness. In the immensities which surrounded him his cares of the day seemed petty indeed and fell away from him. What was he! he reflected, this atom in Time and Space, this ephemera, to rail at fate and mistrust the Power that had placed him here. That Time and Space exist at all—by virtue of the fact—comes its inevitable corollary, infinite justice. These thoughts brought peace and content with them, and a perfect calm would pervade his being like an aura, sending him back to sleep with a slumber profound as that of childhood. The stars taught him resignation.

Opportunities are always given us to rise superior to our trials. With the same persistence that Nature repairs man's ravages on the earth, covering broken and hideous outlines with vegetation, she heals the mind too of its troubles. Everything in Nature is prolific, our thoughts most of all; it is astonishing how fast they breed, and to what reserves undreamed of they lead when allowed the right direction.

Through much introspection he was becoming spiritualized, his mind opening to spiritual truths like a flower to the sun. Some energy seemed at work within him stimulating thought and feeling. A higher life than anything he had yet aspired to, seemed often within reach. There were voices not

to be stilled, telling of potentialities within him, which, given favoring conditions might even yet be productive of great results.

The creative impulse began to waken in him seeking expression. His artist's sensibilities found better chance of development in this desert life, than was possible in the old life of the town with its myriad distractions. Beauty of form and of color, magical beauty diffused itself all about him; he found himself daily growing more sensitive to its influence. Could he but adequately put this beauty on record, that were indeed worth all the pains of the past, and would give effective promise for the future.

Health, open sesame to all the gifts of the gods, had been taken from him, but he sometimes thought that, in the compensations of life, it was possible that something even better was like to be substituted for it—its withdrawal the means of bringing out latent powers hitherto untouched. By the light of a new knowledge which had come to him of late he saw that the old life of health had not been characterized by real contentment—always there had been an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, a consciousness that he was not living up to his best powers. In the retrospect, a keynote of sadness constantly underlay his enjoyments, like a minor chord.

Most of all in his dreams, it seemed to him did this altered condition in his mental outlook become apparent. Even in the old days of health (his sickness made a dividing point in his life, everything being dated either from its advent or before) there had been singular features in the dream-life. One dream in particular, which came to have an important bearing on his present life, had come to him repeatedly in those days. There were occasional variations, but in its essentials it was very much the same. He always found himself in some old-world church or gallery where were paintings which appeared to be, at times, his own work, again that of others, but entirely within the compass of his ability to execute. At such times he always realized plainly his calling as that of an artist, the critical faculty well developed, achieving without surprise to himself results that placed him well in advance of his contemporaries. These dreams made an impression on him, so that at various times he made sporadic attempts at drawing and painting in which he showed some proficiency. In the stress of business life, however, the aspirations thus engendered had been stilled almost in their incipiency. The desert proved a better environment for the development of the higher life.

He long before had discovered that he could

induce sleep when restless by taking up the incidents of some dream and carrying them through his consciousness as if occurring in real life. He now went a step further, and essayed calling up this particular dream, in the effort of making it come to him at will. This was attempted on retiring, and although he was not always successful, the dream came to pass enough times to keep his interest in the subject alive. Aided by his gradually unfolding psychic powers, he was able to perceive, while in the dream-state, his own intelligence, as it were apart from himself, idealized, heightened, augmented; he saw this other self expounding, analyzing, giving of its knowledge to others. On awakening, the visual impressions remained clearly in his consciousness so that he could call up the picture at will, but the ideas that had been expressed remained hazy and indefinite.

He began the attempt of so charging his mind while in the dream with the ideas which were being expressed by this other self, as to enable him to remember them in detail on awaking. Could this ability, this pure knowledge existing apparently in such superabundance in the subliminal self be made available to his present needs; were there indeed such reserves for him to draw on; could he bring into requisition the resources of that other self; what possibilities were not held out in the

prospect! The blood tingled in his veins at the thought. A year thus were worth a dozen of the ordinary kind.

But the plan did not give the immediate results he had hoped for. Aside from the vivid picture of the dream, he was unable to bring back to waking consciousness more than a few sentences, of no great importance. But he became aware of greater receptivity in himself while in the dream-state to all the incidents of the dream-picture; the paintings began to take on a new meaning, and he came to note points in the architecture of the building, and details of the persons assembled which had hitherto escaped him.

Thus encouraged, he continued his experiments, with the object of having projected on his waking consciousness the frame of mind which possessed him while participating in the dream, in the assurance that some glimmering of the concrete intelligence of the other self would thus be retained.

Apprehension and dread were expunged in the clearer light that now came to him. The mind, thank God! could be made amenable to his needs, even though the body was failing him. By conscious direction, by intelligent willing, accessions of sanity, of mental poise came to him. The mystical other life, deep down in the lowermost strata

of his consciousness, to which everything else seemed subject, claimed his attention and revealed itself more and more to him with the progress of the days. He became conscious of mental and spiritual expansion, of development, along lines and to a degree that formerly would not have seemed possible to him.

He was close to the eternal verities now. The consciousness of the existence within him of such potentialities lent dignity to life, although he saw that it might not be vouchsafed him to live long enough in which to give them adequate expression. He abandoned his ranch work, giving himself unreservedly to this new aim, which as by a miracle had come into his life. He worked at his drawing and painting every day, choosing always the same hours, working to the limit of his strength, advancing his standards as his work improved. As he progressed on the road, he found always a wider mental vision opening out before him, ever a readier grasp of the technicalities of his subject.

That his work became all in all to him, need hardly be said. The joy that only the creative impulse can give was his. Life or death mattered but little to him now. All the bitterness, the despair that had formerly assailed him when considering his physical condition had left him. In

the quality of the work he was doing, came his compensation. For there was the artist touch, now, in all that he did. He knew by divination that his work had merit. He was approaching the goal! He had always known, intuitively, that he had it in him to do good work, could he have given up everything else for it. Potentially, the ability had always been there, awaiting development.

And now it had been brought about! At last he was using his powers worthily. To attain to such knowledge—this is the supreme joy. Even though he had to be brought to death's door to find himself, it was not too dearly bought. Life, in the illumination in which he now lived, was indeed a precious gift. In having it, he was much to the good; it had been well worth while—and although he realized the slender tenure on which he held it, he could still exult in its possession. That his work had merit—this was the main thing. What did it matter even though he should not live to see it recognized? It was enough to know that the time would come when others would realize its worth, beholding it with the admiration and reverent wonder that all fine achievements inspire. The great reward was his anyway.

The psychological life waxed as the physical waned. A feeling of elation, of exaltation tran-

scending anything of which he had yet conceived, at times overcame him. The joy in his creative work suffused itself through all the fibres of his being, rising on rare occasions to ecstasy. In losing the world he had gained it after all.

CHAPTER XIX

FULLERTON did not go back to Bowlegs as he had planned to do. When the time approached for his return, he found himself oppressed with a sense of loneliness at the thought of the depleted Camp, and, while it was his custom usually to act from a sense of duty rather than inclination, duty had to go by the board this time.

"Go back? What was there to go back to?" he asked himself, while his mind revolted at the loneliness and privation of it. The squalor of such a life! That he should have been willing to live it for so long! At last he had summoned the resolution to try for something better. He decided to go to California to the Summer Camp, ask Miss Travis to marry him, and tell her the story of his life. He would show her the letter he had recently received from Mr. Edmundston in proof that he was legally free to marry again.

Acting on this resolution, he sent his ponies back to Bowlegs by an Indian, together with a letter stating that he would not return to the Camp for

several weeks. He then told White of his intention to go to California, but did not mention his ulterior purpose.

"I'll go along," was White's reply. He had been wavering in his resolution of remaining in the Camp, knowing that he would be doubly lonely after Fullerton's departure. "I'll go with you. If I had anything to do, I would not mind the heat so much, or the loneliness either, for that matter. Both together are rather more than I can stand."

After the departure of White and Fullerton the Camp was practically deserted so far as its former occupants went, only Branscombe and Fillmore remaining. It was, however, a scene of greater activity than at any time during the past winter, owing to the steady sawing and hammering of a corps of carpenters, which went on throughout the day, in their effort to convert a carload of lumber and shingles into a row of tent-houses, in the shortest possible time.

The grounds were rapidly assuming the form of a tent village. The cottages now being put up would accommodate twenty-five persons, and when finished, Branscombe felt that he would be justified in taking a vacation himself.

On the morning following the departure of White and Fullerton for California, Branscombe

and Fillmore, driving into town discussed the matter of bettering the Camp for the next season.

"A hospital, or rather a large ward, open on three sides, with nurses' rooms off, is a matter of the first necessity in a health camp, so that those who have to keep to their beds can be under constant supervision. Of course, this involves the expense of a nurse, but it is really one of the essentials of the Camp," said Fillmore, whose interest in the matter was equal to Branscombe's.

"It can be managed for the time being, anyway," replied Branscombe. "I may as well tell you—you have probably long ago divined the fact, that I am alone in the enterprise. I have known all along that you knew it, but it seemed easier to keep up the fiction than to talk about it. Since I don't want any credit for it, there is really not much reason for my being known in the matter." After a short pause, he added: "This idea of working for others is something new and foreign to my habits, and I have to accustom myself to it. As yet, it seems, even to me, often only a pose. Selfishness is so ingrained in us that any divergence from a selfish policy lays one open to a suspicion as to motive; with those of a habitually low order of thinking, one's intelligence even is brought into question."

"That is too often the case," assented Fillmore.

"Though condemned theoretically, it is everywhere tacitly approved. The sin of the world is selfishness in that it leads to and includes all other sins. It is this that is at the other end of the pole from spirituality, that crowds out spirituality in the individual. As you say, it is ingrained in us, and the person who goes counter to so prevalent a mode of thought must needs have singleness of purpose."

"The best way is to go your own course in the old Davy Crockett fashion," responded Branscombe. "After all, one does these things from inner conviction; not for the approbation of others."

"Have you decided as to the charge that will be made for board?"

"Twenty-five dollars per month is as much as they can afford to pay. Few of them have means of their own; many, I find, are supported from the earnings of mother or sisters. If all were able to pay, and with good management, it might be made self-supporting at this price. There are boarding houses in the city, I find, setting a very good table, where at a charge of thirty dollars per month, a fair annual profit is made, and this, notwithstanding high rents, increased servant hire and other expenses that go with a house in the city, which do not obtain in a camp. But I do not aim to make

it even approximately self-supporting. This, at the price charged, could only be accomplished by being stringent in making collections, and this would defeat the very object for which the Camp is projected. I want to make life easier for them. Worry over money matters kills more consumptives than the disease itself, I find."

"It might be possible to get contributions from outside sources to help carry it on," suggested Fillmore, "from the tourists and townspeople when the work is once under way."

"Not while it is a private enterprise. I expect to make up the deficit for the next few years at least, until the project is well on its feet. It is a satisfaction to me to do this. The work interests me and I ought to be willing to make some sacrifices for it. If it grows, and the deficit becomes larger than I can meet, I will put it out of my hands, giving it in charge of an institution like the Y. M. C. A., or a committee of townspeople."

Deep in their project, they did not at first notice a smart turnout approaching them, until Fillmore chanced to look up, and, seeing the occupant, a fashionably gowned lady, young and good-looking, gazing at Branscombe with a slightly bewildered air, directed his attention to the equipage. As he looked up, the lady, apparently confirmed in her first impression as to his identity, gave a hurried

order to the coachman to stop, and leaning out, eager and smiling, extended her hand to him as he approached the carriage.

"Larry! You don't mean to say that you are here! In Arizona, of all places in the world! We'd concluded that you'd gone abroad. To think that I've been in town almost a week, and not have known that you were here!"

Branscombe, though feeling very much as did Robinson Crusoe when he first discovered the footprints on his island, nerved himself to the kind of badinage that he knew was expected of him.

"You don't say you're delighted to see me. Whenever I used to meet any one unexpectedly in Florida or the White Mountains, they always said that first."

"I am delighted to see you, but I'm not going to tell you so. You don't deserve any complimentary speeches, running away from us in that fashion. Walter was more disappointed than I can tell you; he had counted on you for the Canadian trip. Bainbridge and Winslow were with him, and they wanted you badly. They left letters at your clubs and bachelor quarters with the request that they be forwarded, and when still they didn't hear from you, they decided that you had gone to the Sahara. Bainbridge or Winslow, I forget which, remembered that you had once

spoken about making a trip out onto the desert, and when we couldn't reach you, we concluded you had gone there."

"I see you continue to bracket Bainbridge and Winslow together as formerly."

"Yes. People call them the Heavenly Twins, they're so constantly together." Then, with a sudden change of mien, "You tried our patience to the breaking point, running off that way. What had we ever done to you to deserve such treatment? (Fillmore had left some time before). But I haven't the heart to scold you, I'm only too glad to see a familiar face again. Come back to the hotel with me," making room for him, "and I'll continue to be good-natured. And where have you been ever since? Here? In Arizona? Then you must have a gold-mine. Nothing short of that would keep you here so long. I suppose you'll have a box at the opera next season and be setting up a stable and a bachelor place in the country. How Walter'll envy you! I anticipate an unholy joy in noting his discomfiture. You've always been such good friends that he couldn't well help being envious should you so outtop him when you return. How lovely it must be to make so brilliant a success, that all your friends will hate you for it! That's really the best test of success, because it's a genuine appreciation wrung from them against

their will! They're always ready enough to yield their admiration to a moderate success, such as any one might make, but when they hate you, it's a spontaneous tribute only called forth by talents of the highest order."

Branscombe was amused. If Walter Copeland had been so anxious to see him in his trouble, he might have gone down to the Tombs, or on his release, to his bachelor quarters. In any case, the newspapers would have given him the required information as to his whereabouts. The naïveté of trying to ignore the whole thing in so transparent a fashion! And the nerve of it! Still, he must do what was expected of him. He was gentleman enough to follow a lady's lead, no matter into what sloughs of deceit it led. Come to think of it, there was no deceit about it. Each knew that the other was playing a part.

"I cannot tell you how lonely I've been this past week. Why couldn't I have discovered you before?"

"You didn't prospect in the right places. I've turned ranchman. I'm living in the country."

"You've changed somehow. You look different—more moral, as if you were going to try to be good. Don't! You'll never keep it up. It's too difficult. That kind of thing doesn't come easy or natural to people of our type. Yes!

You're different. It can't be due to the pastoral scenes among which you live?"

"It's the effect of the actinic rays. They credit everything to that in this country. If you stay, you'll come under the influence too."

"And become good? How nice! How long must I stay to bring this about? But perhaps that depends on the previous state and condition. I fear I never could keep it up in the strain of city life. You must stay to dinner, and to-morrow you can take me to your gold-mine. Don't tell me you haven't one! Nothing short of that could keep you here all this time." After a pause she continued with a kind of feverish gayety: "It's not a question of health with you? No! I'll acquit you of that, but that's what has brought me here, and I'm all broken up over my cousin's death too. You remember Sandford Blakeslee? He was attacked by consumption two years ago, and came here and camped all alone on the desert. He died in January last."

"I remember him, but did not see him here. I read the notice of his death in the local paper, and thought it must be the same person. I never saw very much of him back East. Tell me, did he paint much of late years?"

"He used to try his hand at water-colors, poor boy, but he had very little time for it; only Sun-

days and holidays. He used to say that he had it in him to do good work could he have put all his time into it. I have a winter scene that he did, which has been commended. We were all at Palm Beach when he died, and as I was worrying about my health, they didn't tell me about it. Don't ever advise anyone to go to Palm Beach for rest and recuperation. There was every bit as much to do there as if I had stayed at home. They would keep you going twenty-four hours a day, if you would let them. I was run down in health and was told to go to Florida and rest up until spring, instead of which I danced like a dervish most of the time. And now the doctor says there's a lesion, but it's only slight as yet, and by being careful for a year, I'll probably come out of it all right. So I've come, with father, my maid and a nurse, to stay here a few days; after which we'll go to Southern California for the summer."

Branscombe began casting about in his mind for some comment to make to this, but before he could think of anything, she began again:

"The doctors tell me there's no kind of danger if I'm careful, and keep away from the city, otherwise, the consequences may be very bad. You'll stay to dinner—one o'clock dinner, but it's not bad otherwise. Father will want to see you. He's getting restless, and wants to leave for Pasadena,

but with management, he can be kept here a few days longer—solely on your account."

When the carriage reached the hotel, Branscombe handed out Miss Copeland with all the gallantry which that personage was accustomed to, receiving in return one of her best smiles—she had quite a repertoire of them adapted to all situations—as reward.

Within, in an embrasure screened from view, a woman stood, taking in the little tableau. She was outwardly calm, except for blazing eyes.

"He is as young as ever, younger!" she said to herself, "and as careless. Nothing touches him! The man, he is made for enjoyment, and the woman for suffering! He is not changed except for the little white hair sprinkled in with the black."

When they entered the hotel the maid, having evidently watched for the carriage, was in the lobby awaiting them.

"You see how they coddle me!" remarked Miss Copeland. "My nurse is a jewel. If good care will accomplish anything, I'm sure to get well soon. She has been for nearly a year with the Wiltons, until Amy died. You remember Amy? She did not go out much of late years, poor dear, they've had scandal and trouble of various kinds in the family, and it has helped to break down

her health. They were in the Adirondacks part of the time, and then at Liberty."

The rencontre bored him. How tiresome these social amenities, where talk was so often forced and the pose of each known to be a pose by the other. Out here, if you didn't have anything to say you kept your mouth shut, and it was all right. With his new mental attitude, however, of desiring always to regard any question from the viewpoint of the other as well as from his own, he listened politely to the father's platitudes as well as to the daughter's sallies. And when the father expressed his determination of leaving on the following evening for Pasadena, he even joined with Miss Copeland, in urging some delay.

He had often visited at their country house with Walter, who was a classmate at college, and he and Miss Kittie used to have some jokes in common, but she had never shown any particular preference for his society; to-day, however, she had fairly monopolized him.

A less experienced man of the world might have been deceived or even flattered by all this friendliness. Branscombe, however, had worked the society treadmill too thoroughly during the past five years to be taken in by it. He could readily follow the line of reasoning that prompted it. It was plain the Copelands regretted now not having

stood by him in his trouble. True, they were out of town at the time, in their country house, but that did not excuse them. Now that it was a thing of the past, they probably realized that he had been treated unjustly by the others, and, as an old family friend, had certainly deserved better from themselves. Their defection toward him might make an embarrassing situation when he should return, as Miss Kittie so evidently expected he would do. And with the glamour of a great fortune achieved by him, all would lionize him! Clearly it would be the part of wisdom to make her peace with him now. These women!

He was still smiling inwardly at the thought of the supposititious gold-mine, and the social prestige he was attaining thereby, when the rustle of the nurse's garments caused him to look up mechanically, and he gave a violent start. It was as if an electric shock had gone through him, but he pulled himself together with a powerful effort, listening with what patience he could command to Mr. Copeland's arguments for immediate departure, which he now began to acquiesce in.

And the nurse, what of her? No trace of agitation was visible here. With the habit of self-restraint necessary to her profession, she betrayed no sign of ever having met the visitor before. But ere he left, she managed to hand him a note

unobserved by the others, which he took mechanically, and slipped into a pocket.

Fifine in the States! In Arizona! And yet, why not? Did she not have as good a right here as anyone? It was now five years since he had left Paris. She had changed, in her demeanor most of all. Of course, the old lightsomeness would be out of place in her profession as nurse, but the expression of her face precluded its existence. Could she too have suffered? Had his going made a permanent difference to her? He would see her; it would be best. He hoped there would be no scene. It was the dread of this that had caused him to leave her as he had, by the ruse of saying that he was going away for a few days with a party of friends from the States who wanted him for a trip into Brittany.

When he got to the lobby, he opened the note and read:

MONSIEUR: (Fifine to address him in this fashion. Truly the years had changed her.) I must see you. Don't deny me. I have endured much since the old Paris days. Come to the post-office to-morrow morning. I will be there at eight. Mlle. Kittie does not rise generally until ten. You did not know it, but I was in New York a year before you left. I have been in a training school already in Paris, and came to New York with an American family. We leave for Pasadena soon. Come to-morrow.

FIFINE.

He would have to see her, that was plain. It was embarrassing, but there was no help for it. Why should she wish to see him? Not to reproach him, not even the old Fifine would have done that. That was not what he had feared when leaving her as he had. It was only that he was a very coward at facing distress and tears. She would soon get over it he had thought at the time, and meanwhile, why should either of them be more uncomfortable than was necessary?

Luckily, she would soon be gone, and then life would flow on again in its old even course.

On his way back to Camp, he fell to planning the studio he intended building, and which he would use for his bachelor quarters. There should be two stories to it, consisting of one large, square room on each floor. The room on the main floor would be the studio or living-room, and, detached from it there would be a kitchen, with a bath-room above. The room over the studio would be furnished as a bedroom, but he would sleep on a balcony opening out from it, which would connect with the bath-room. His meals would be served in the living-room.

The bedroom must be simple and restful. He already had a picture of it in his mind. The prevailing tones of the room should be ivory white and green. The floor, ceiling and woodwork

white, the wall hangings and rug plain green. The furniture should be mahogany, and in lieu of all gewgaws or pictures, there should be a large Buddha. This would dominate the room, with its atmosphere of calm.

The ranch-house should be put in shape for the Deacon and his wife, and he would beautify the grounds to some extent. There would be a rose garden, and some palms and Italian cedars and quick-growing shade trees.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN Branscombe reached the post-office in the morning, he found Fifine awaiting him outside. She was the first to speak:

"I have done much thinking Monsieur—" Branscombe made a deprecatory gesture when she began with the formal address, which she appeared not to notice—"much thinking since the old Paris days. I do not regret them, neither do I desire them nor their like back again. And I do not blame you so much now. You were not the first; there was a predecessor. I made no secret of this. But there has been no one else! I swear to you, no one has taken your place. My faults were the faults of my surroundings, of my class. I know better now, but I did not know then what such conduct involved—what a penalty I would later have to pay—how it would color my whole life! When I lost you I suffered! I suffered more than I can tell! and I said: No more of this! They do not care how they treat you. They play with you, you make life pleasant for them for a while; until they find some one they like

better; and they throw you aside. Only a grisette! You would give your life for them, and they give you hardly a thought. You men are selfish, *égoïste*, wanting all, and giving nothing in return. We give you the whole wealth of our affection, and our good name along with it, and you reward us by taking us out on a Sunday afternoon. That, you think, is ample recompense. Your two thousand francs, Monsieur, that you sent me before leaving Paris are in the bank in your name. You were too sure that I would accept it. You thought it would heal my hurt."

They were walking out one of the broad avenues leading into the country. Spacious mansions dotted the roadway on either side. The gardens were all ablow with billowy masses of lilies and roses. The chatter of grackles was abroad in the land. The air of the early morning was pure and cool, but Branscombe felt as if he were stifling. Again the inward drama! Again the mentor at his elbow!

Presently she continued:

"I wanted to tell you about the money—that it is still yours—but I wanted not to hurt you in return, because in my foolish heart the love is there still. But in my brain there is no love, and it is my brain that controls me now. You never considered what it meant to me, your coming into

my life for so long, and then leaving me that way. I tell you it was worse than death to me. But for one thing, I should have ended it all. I should not have kept on living."

"Fifine," began Branscombe, his voice so husky as to be scarcely recognizable, "I know I have wronged you. I don't know how to talk very well —it never came easy to me—and if I did, there is nothing that could be said that would palliate matters. I will make you the only reparation I can, and that is to offer you marriage. If you will marry me I promise to do what I can to make you happy. Together, we will strive upward toward a worthier life."

She was silent for a few moments in astonishment. "I thought I knew you, Larry," she pronounced the word softly, hesitatingly, as if fearing to take a liberty, "but I knew you very little. I always knew you for a gentleman; but I never would have expected this. And while it would never occur to me to take you at your word—I am done with everything of that kind—I believe you to be in earnest. I am glad that my little Larry has such good blood in his veins."

Branscombe started violently. "Your—do you mean——"

"Yes!" she interrupted him, and came near hating him as she saw the eager look, the longing,

the hunger in his eyes. "This, too, he wants," she thought. "They are all alike. They always want, want, what you care for most. They want all, all! and they end by getting it too! They always want the kernel and leave you the shell."

She continued:

"I wanted you to know about the money, and sometimes I thought you ought to know about the boy, your boy, so that if anything happened to me, you could take my place. But only in case I was no more," she hastened to add, noting the eager look again in his eyes. "I knew you would act the father's part to him, I knew what it would mean to you. That Sunday, a few months before you left for the States, when we were together in the Bois de Boulogne and you bought bonbons and tossed them to the little boy on the bench near us; do you recollect? And how he came nearer and you sat him between us, and he reached out shyly and put his little hand in yours snuggling up close to you away from me? And then you stroked his hair with your free hand, and a look came into your eyes that I had never seen there. It was a look that I liked, and after, when the little one came, I forgave you much, because of it."

They had strayed off the avenue, down a side lane, and seated themselves on a log under some

cottonwoods out of the sun, away from all inquisitive eyes or ears except those of the grackles all about them.

"And he brought me solace," she continued, "for though I had lost you, I had you over again in him. And I fancied that when you were young you were just such a child. See, here is his picture. I have it in my locket so that I can look at it whenever the desire comes strongly to me. And when he grew more and more into your image, I the more lost my bitterness. I said: He will make up to me for your loss. And I prayed the good God to forgive me, for that I had felt so bitter for his coming, after you had abandoned me."

"Fifine, you torture me! Let me make it up to you, all the suffering I have caused you!"

"The grisette has some good traits. She is industrious and economical, and this keeps her respectable, at least according to her ideas of the word. At all events she accepts no money that has not been earned by the work of her hands. When the little one came, I had money enough laid by to last me a while. Then, the good Sisters in charge where I was when my child was born urged me to study nursing, and I got good positions as soon as I was capable. I have been in no money trouble because of the added expense that he makes me.

And I always felt that I wanted to see you once more. If I could have said Adieu! and have returned you your money, the longing to see you once again might not have been so great.

"Then the chance came to go to the States with an American family with whom I had been living in Paris. I knew the little one was being well taken care of, and I came, thinking I might get a sight of you. I did not intend to stay here long, but the family needed me, and were kind to me. I could earn much more in this country than in Paris, and, I thought, I have need to earn and to save for my little one; by and by it will cost more to keep him, and I may take sickness; he must be placed above the reach of want. So I stayed on.

"Then your trouble came. The papers were full of it. If there had been anything I could have done, I would have gone to you, for I always believed in you. I said: 'He would not do that! Not that! If there has been anything between them, and he has grown tired of her, he would have left her (Branscombe winced perceptibly), but he would not harm her.'"

A thought struck him. "Fifine, was it you that sent me the violets every day?"

She nodded affirmatively.

"You were the only one! the only one to stay by me or believe in me."

"I wanted to tell you so. I wanted to write and say: 'Monsieur, I believe in you. I believe you are innocent,' but when I had the letter written I would not send it. I thought: 'He will not understand my motive; he may mistake me.' I could not have stood that!"

"Fifine," he said softly, "I have been very unhappy until recently. Of late it has seemed possible to get into a better mode of life. I have wronged you; how much I never knew myself until this morning when I met you again. Let me undo that wrong so far as is possible."

"The wrong is no more, Monsieur. You have already blotted it out by your action. But nothing has been further from my mind than marriage. And marriage with you! No! Monsieur, my wildest fancies never made such a leap! I know your American prejudices! The stain always remains on the woman. And I am not your equal socially. You would never have thought to marry me had you known me when I was the simple, innocent country girl, and you shall not marry me now. In the eyes of your friends, I am not half so worthy of you now as I would have been then. No! I will not. I have my pride too."

"You forget, in making the past a barrier between us, that I have participated in it; that it is

not so exclusively yours as you assume. Both are involved."

"But it is the woman on whom the punishment falls! And I do not want that you sacrifice yourself for me."

"There is no sacrifice in the matter. I have no family to make objections. I am alone. There is no one with the right to say a word, or to offend you in any way. Here, as my wife, the past will never be inquired into. Our marriage will right all."

"You feel so now, Monsieur (again the deprecatory gesture from him), but you might not always feel so. Forgive me for touching on this topic again—I do not wish to pain you, but your desertion was almost more than I could bear. I know if you took upon yourself the obligations you propose," she hastened to add, seeing the changed expression in his face, "you would carry them out to the letter. It is in your blood to do this. But you are a gentleman, and used to gentlefolk, and I am not a lady in that sense, not like Mlle. Kittie, we will say. And if you should become tired of me I would know it, you could not hide it from me though you did from every one else, and I would be miserable. I fear to stake all again. At least, now, I have peace. And I could not go through with it again, that pain. I

have tried to teach myself ever since that man is an enemy to hide away from. When I came to Arizona," she continued after a pause occasioned by watching two little children go by on a burro, "I did not know you were here. I did not know where you were. But when I saw you step from the carriage and hand out Mlle. Kittie —Ciel, what a name! The young of a cat! When I saw you hand her out so *poliment,* so gallantly, I almost hated you. I said a little while ago that in wishing to meet you again I did not want to pain you, but that was not quite true. When I saw the *empressement* which you accorded Mlle. Kittie, I said: 'This is the way he can do among his own kind. I! who gave up those best years to him, would he ever show me such courtesy?' And I hardened myself against you; for I realized then more than ever before, the difference that station makes. And then I thought: 'I will tell him! He shall know! I will tell him about the child, his child, back in Paris, in the convent among the good Sisters, and perhaps I can make him long for something that is beyond his reach! something that he can never have! It will not hurt him as his abandonment hurt me, because he has never known him; but he will have the longing——'"

"Fifine," he interrupted, "if I had known

about the child I would have sought you out. It makes every difference in the world. There is no other way for either of us. You must marry me. There is no other way to set everything right."

"But now," she continued, not noticing the interruption, "I am sorry for the—the *vindicatif* spirit that led me to ask for a meeting. And I am sorry if I have pained you. For you have made my own heart lighter. Always I will think better of myself and of you for this."

"Fifine, try to see this matter in its right light. You have set yourself against me. Try not to be stubborn. Look at it from my point of view. Come. Say yes!"

"I cannot! I am not what you Americans call 'cut out' for the part. I am not like Mlle. Kittie. I have seen your Fifth Avenue. I know what the life is like. It is not for me, that life. I would rather have my own life, by working, than that. I am not like those people. And then our past——"

"The past is nothing, and should never be considered," he interrupted. "We have only the present; let us live that properly, and everything else will be well. Our future shall justify the past."

"As your wife, I would always be acting a part among them. What brings you to Arizona?"

she asked suddenly, looking at him narrowly the while; "not the consumption? No! I did not think so. Then why do you stay? It is all blown over, that affair of the boat! Mlle. Kittie had much to say about it last night to her father, and said that the others had wronged you and were sorry. When you come back, she said, they will do much to make it up to you. You will receive much attention from your friends."

"I shall not go back. What is there to go back to? I like this life. I am living quite simply, but I am content. That is, I have been until now. Certainly this makes a difference. The training of the boy," in his eyes she read his longing, "would indeed give me something to live for."

Some Sonora doves alighted almost at their feet, seemingly aware that it was now the close season, and that they had nothing to fear from their arch-enemy. She watched them a few moments before replying. When she began, her voice was hoarse with emotion.

"You have shown me that you can be unselfish, Larry—" again she spoke the name softly, hesitatingly, as if fearing an impropriety in using the old familiar name in these changed relations—"you have shown me that you can make sacrifices —something which I never would have expected from you. I know you well enough to know that

you mean what you say, that you would not offer marriage if you did not mean it and be willing to abide by it whatever it might bring. You shall not be alone in this. I will show you I too can be generous. I will let you have him!" She spoke vehemently, dramatically, as only the Latin can, as the Latin must when under strong excitement. "I will give him to you! You shall have him!"

"Not unless you'll come too. You said a little while back that we men are selfish, that we want all. That is what I want. I want the boy, but I want you too. And a child's life without a mother's tenderness is only half a life."

"He is yours to do what you will with. To-night I will write to the Sisters in the convent in Paris, and tell them the story, and I will tell them that it is my wish that the child should go to his father. And once in a while I may see him?"

"Shall I always be taking advantage of you!" he rejoined, and there was a ring of the old self-scorn in the tones of his voice, albeit a prouder carriage of the head—"shall I always take advantage of you, accepting everything from you and giving nothing in return? Fifine, I am trying to learn how to live a different life. I have always thought of myself first; always myself. It did not make much difference about the others, so that I might have what I desired. That was the impor-

tant thing. No matter if others suffered on account of it; it was a pity that it should have to be so, but it never stopped me. Their view, their side of the question I never considered. But now, since coming to Arizona, to be accurate, since last December, I am learning better. I am learning that you cannot harm another without harming yourself; and conversely, you cannot help another without benefiting yourself most of all. Everything that you do, good or ill, reacts on yourself for good or ill. I now know that it is not good for us to have our own way all the time—that it is often necessary to give up—to renounce. And when we have learned this lesson of renunciation, sorrow loses its power over us. When we can rise superior to our desires, we find that there is given us in place of them something that we prize more highly. I should feel like a cur to take advantage of you any more. And I will not deprive the boy of the mother who is far more to him than the father ever could hope to be."

A certain nobility came to her features—there was dignity in her bearing and manner as she answered him:

"You are much changed, Larry. You say true, in the old time you would not have thought of this. You are changed in mind, but you have not grown older. When I first saw you, when you

stepped from the carriage, I said: 'The years have been kinder to him than to me. He is as young as ever, all except the little white hair sprinkled in with the black.' But now I know that you, too, have suffered in the years that have gone."

The morning was far advanced. The sun was riding high in the heavens. Under the shade of the cottonwoods they were comfortable, and, in their intense preoccupation did not notice the lapse of time.

"Fifine, you are my wife, bound to me just as closely as if priest or minister had joined us. This is my view of the matter in the light of what has come to pass. Nothing that you say or do will change it; we are husband and wife, just as that boy is our child. You cannot get away from it. And you have obligations to the boy and to me—the obligations of the wife and mother. The thing to consider now, is, what is most desirable for the boy. He is the key to the situation."

There was a new and unmistakable tone of command, of masterfulness in his voice, at which she quailed. Womanlike, when he took this tone, she felt herself becoming like clay in his hands. She must not lose sight of her duty to him. She must be resolute in putting away this happiness she felt she did not deserve.

"Do not urge me, Larry," she pleaded. "Do

not tempt me to do what might bring unhappiness to both."

"The child must be considered first. You have to think what is best for him. In any event, he must remain with his mother. Nothing can make up to a child for the loss of its mother. I always felt better acquainted with my mother, and more nearly related to her, than to my father. There is nothing else to do that would be right for each. Father and mother must unite for the child's sake. And he will do better here in every way. The outdoor life in the pure air will make a strong, healthy lad of him. We will take him away from Paris before he can become contaminated by its vices."

The grackles had been reinforced by another colony, and all seemed bent on elucidating the mystery of this couple below. A mocking-bird in a mesquite tree near by, rolled off his pretty roundelay.

"Let me tell you what keeps me here. I have hardly spoken of it as yet. This is a country to which consumptives come in large numbers in the autumn and winter, as you may know. Many come with little or no money. They are desperate —they do not want to die, and they come here on the chance of earning something while making the cure. Many might be cured if they had a chance, who die for want of the right kind of help. There

is no work for that class here, and so their condition becomes worse—much worse, than if they had remained at their homes. The suffering that goes on among these people, helpless through no fault of their own, can hardly be described. We, who have always had health and the means of support could never imagine it, and can hardly believe it when we see it.

"Then there is another class, people who have some means, but very limited. These are almost as bad off as the others, as they haven't money enough to provide themselves with what they need to make the cure, and so, only prolong their misery. They need help. To battle with a disease like consumption is hard enough without having to suffer from the want of money along with it. And they worry more on account of their poverty than their illness. It is no more than right—it is no more than the simplest justice that those with health and means should do what they can for these people who lack both.

"Fifine, I am planning to do something to relieve this situation. It is only by a combination of favoring conditions that the consumptive can hope to recover. When everything is right, many cures are effected and the lives of others prolonged. And no provision has been made for them here, as yet. They are dying all about us for the want

of just such help as I can provide. This is what I have in hand. I am starting a Camp where these people can be properly looked after—where those that are not too bad can be cured, and the others made comfortable. In this work you will be a helpmeet to me in every sense of the word. Here, in this work, you will be my equal, my superior in the eyes of all. In this Western country, women are accorded a deference that is wholly unknown in your land. And you will like the work. There is more satisfaction in it than can be had in the other mode of life which we both have tested and have found insufficient to our needs. There is to be a hospital here, so that all those who have to keep to their beds—those merely running temperature as well as the very sick—can be under constant supervision. The best results in critical cases can only be secured by individualized treatment."

How animated he became as he warmed up to his theme! The uplifted head, the mobile features, the glistening eyes—here was intensity of purpose of which she heretofore had had no concept.

"As usual, this part of the work, being the hardest, the most responsible, delicate, riskful to the health, falls to the woman. The young men, especially when they are very sick, do much better

when there is a woman about. They long for her presence, her sympathy, the touch of her hand, the cheer of her words. She inspires confidence, hope, and her presence really holds out a possibility of recovery to them which would not be the case otherwise."

A subtle, indefinable change came over her features as he said this.

He continued: "You will take charge of this, Fifine, but you will have an assistant nurse, so that your health will not suffer. You will have others depending on you. You will take care of your health for the sake of others as well as yourself. The ward will be constructed so that it will practically be a screened room, three sides of it open to the elements. In bad weather, which only seldom occurs, canvas-covered frames will be put on the sides from whence the wind comes. At all other times, it will practically be like out of doors. It will be a busy life for both, and will yield us much satisfaction."

Branscombe paused, knowing that he had prevailed. To appeal to her generosity—to ask sacrifices—here he touched the very heart and core of womanhood. He could not have hit on a line of argument better calculated to carry his point.

Fifine, in all the stress of conflicting emotions, of love on the one side, duty, or rather her concept

of it, on the other—found herself wondering at his flow of language. Though not taciturn in the old Paris days, yet distinctly speech had been silver with him; silence golden. He was convincing in this new rôle, and she found herself carried along in the flow of his enthusiasm, in spite of all her resolutions.

And, after all, their marriage would not be the anomaly that it had first seemed.

This work would go far to redeem the past—would render her more worthy of the new relation. In the old Paris days it would not have done at all. She had never thought of it as a possible outcome of their relations. Marriage between the former Larry and the former Fifine would have been something *outré,* incongruous, not to be imagined.

But now, all was wholly different. For not only had the circumstances changed—that was something that was unstable at best and continually liable to change—a permanent relation like marriage should have a better groundwork—but what was more important, the character of each had changed; and although character also is mobile, never finished, always in process of becoming, its outcome might fairly well be predicated in the given individual. And in his first words he had indicated this new trend of thought. She had

never imagined him as taking a serious view of life; she had never imagined him as being other than what she had always known him. Under her sense of injury, it had seemed that she had been singled out for discipline; that while suffering had been meted out to her, to him came enjoyment; punishment for her—reward for him.

But now she knew that the years had exacted their tribute from him as from her. Things were not so unequally distributed as she had believed. Both had been chastened. Yes, it was not alone she; he too was changed, changed in every root and fibre of his being. Though the body had remained the same, the mind inhabiting it, the informing spirit, that which constitutes the man, was something wholly other than the former Branscombe.

As for differences in station, it was even as he had said; in this work social distinctions cut but little figure. It was man and woman now, not gentleman and lady. They would be much occupied in their work; this would satisfy them. There was only the one drawback; womanlike, it would be long before she would get over that—that past which for her might never be entirely expunged, even by a future of good deeds.

As for him, manlike, the past troubled him very little, his thoughts being directed always toward

the future. The past was a closed book, of no use to any one. The future held all of promise—of hope—of fulfilment.

"Maternity changes all women for the better," he thought. "It has bettered her, even in the false position in which she is placed. This has retarded her development, but that is a thing of the past now. Marriage will rectify all. The boy, too, will hallow, will spiritualize our relation."

The boy! Already in imagination he felt the grasp of that little hand in his, he saw the confiding upward glance, he divined the outflow of trust, of reliance which the child yields so freely the parent. His the child! he the parent! With the thought came the look in his eyes that she had seen there that Sunday afternoon in the Bois de Boulogne when he had stroked the little one's hair with his disengaged hand; the look that she had liked but had never seen there before; the look that would often be there now.

"And you will sever your relations with the Copelands at once? That is right. Miss Kittie can manage very well with the maid until they get to Pasadena. Now that the main point is settled, you shall have your own way in all minor ones. You, too, are different, Fifine. You, too, have passed through the fire, and have been bet-

tered in the conflict. Such experiences never leave one the same. Either they better, or they embitter one. And how well you speak English. You spoke it only fairly well in the old Paris days."

"To be a nurse I had to, so I studied hard. I became ambitious, for the child's sake.

"Larry," again she spoke the name softly, hesitatingly, still as if fearing to take a liberty, "I will go back to Paris to the little one, and if, in a month, you write for me to come, I will come. You must take time to think it over, and, if you still think this may be, I will come. I promise."

"I know myself well enough to know that I will think the same in a month, in a year, in a lifetime; I can see no reason for delay. But I have told you that since the main point is settled, I will yield the minor ones. I will do as you desire. I leave all to you. One or the other will have to go for the boy. Why not let me go and bring him, in your stead? You stay in this country and rest, and I will go."

"No, Larry, it is better that I go. He may be sick in traveling. I can care for him better. It is better that I go."

Branscombe took out his watch, making an exclamation of surprise. "Two o'clock! What can have become of the day!"

"And you promised to call on Miss Kittie this morning," replied Fifine, upon which they arose and walked back toward the main avenue, still conversing, the grackles, being inquisitive as is the nature of grackles, following closely, in the effort to ascertain what the gentleman's plans were.

They learned finally that he would not call on Miss Kittie, who, to the grackle comprehension, appeared to be something of a disturbing element. He would write her, they heard him say, that he had been prevented from calling that morning by circumstances over which he had no control, and regretted that their early departure would prevent him from seeing them while here, but that he might get to Los Angeles within a month or two, and would then look them up.

They learned, further, that the lady would probably start for the East on the following day; that the gentleman would arrange about the ticket that evening, and would send it by messenger to the hotel. He would also advise her by telephone as to the time of her departure and other details, and would be at the depot to say adieu.

CHAPTER XXI

BRANSCOMBE, now that he had allowed his mind to become receptive to higher influences, found a new life opening out before him in broad vistas of usefulness—a life that he saw he must of necessity follow now that he had essayed it—which in itself would be his reward.

The cause of the unrest and discontent which had so marred his course heretofore had been largely due to the want of a vocation. His life had lacked motive. The project now under way supplied this, and was doing as much for him as for those whom he sought to benefit. There was work to be done now, work of a kind for which he felt himself well fitted, and his days were filled with content.

With the development of character resulting from a mode of life of which he could approve, he found his horizon constantly growing wider, his mental outlook saner. Incorporated now into this throbbing world-life, on which hitherto he had gazed only from afar, having felt himself through long years of inaction incapacitated for

it, he experienced the dignity that comes through participation in it, and it was a sensation as novel as agreeable.

Work, achievement, what a satisfaction there was in it! How much better this, he thought, than the self-culture which in the old Paris days was considered everything, which his associates continually held up to one another as the highest and best that life has to offer. "Art (with a capital A) must be your mistress, your Alpha and Omega. You had but to follow her wherever she might lead, and so attain to the ideal state. If you spent your whole lifetime in painting one good picture," they used to say, "or in doing one bit of good, lasting work, it were well worth while."

But in a world like this, in which the tragedy of it is continually coming to the fore, self-culture, being only another form of self-gratification, might well be relegated to the background until some other and more necessary things be achieved.

This was the burden of Branscombe's thoughts, as he sat before his tent one evening in early June, after a particularly busy day. The evening hour, given over to contemplation under the cottonwoods, came to be the best part of his waking moments. In retrospect, the life of the past months since coming to Arizona, passed before

him. It was as if his intelligence were standing aside from that ego he called himself, enabling him to see and judge these things impersonally.

How his viewpoint had changed since then! He recalled among other episodes, the incidents attending young Latimer's hemorrhage, and the glow of gratification that had suffused his being when Fillmore had complimented him on his prompt action, telling him that he had saved the young fellow's life thereby. Was not this better than painting pictures that nobody wanted to buy? In these beginnings, forces had been set in operation which had brought about this change in his mental outlook. For it was only by taking hold of the life, by identifying himself with it, that he had been enabled to see it from the standpoint of the others.

Branscombe had of necessity changed his plans as regarded California, deciding to go to New York instead, where he would transact some necessary business and await the arrival of Fifine and the boy. They would then proceed leisurely westward, stopping at Denver en route, and would reach Arizona some time in September.

He wrote the Deacon, telling him of his change of plans: "I am going East for my wife and child," he wrote, "on account of which I will be unable to come on to the Summer Camp, but I will

return in September, and will have things in readiness for you, when you come back. The ranch-house will be reserved for you, as has been already arranged, and I am glad to say that the prospect of securing the organ position for your wife seems also good. The salary is small, (of this salary Branscombe himself was to pay the larger part) but with the pupils that she will secure, there will probably be enough for your needs. The studio, elevation drawings of which you saw prior to your departure, is nearing completion. I have made a few alterations and additions to the original plans, putting in a larger kitchen, as well as a governess's room. For the time being, we shall have to have a governess to take charge of our child, as my wife, who is a graduated trained nurse, will take an active part in the work of the Camp."

To this the Deacon returned a characteristic answer, making no comment on his partner's casual reference to wife and child, as if it were quite the regular thing to do, to spring a family onto you without having previously given you even a hint of their existence during a six months' intimate acquaintanceship.

" Dear Padre," he wrote, " we are comfortably settled in our own tent, with vines and fig-trees all about. Quite singularly, my wife (which her

name is Attilla) is content here. Her principal anxiety on coming had been in regard to sleeping out of doors, as she is quite timid, but in this hollow of the hills, in which we are tucked away, we all feel perfectly safe. We are forgotten of the world here, and are quite content. My wife enjoys sleeping out of doors, and says she is growing younger thereby. This rainless, dewless climate of the California foothills is ideally adapted to camping, and we are all enjoying it, the Latimer boys in particular. They contemplate buying a ranch here after another year. They are our nearest neighbors, and my wife is greatly interested in them, in Percy specially. He is gradually improving, but is not yet in the condition he was in before his mishap. They have accepted a very good offer for their San Francisco property, which was beyond the fire-zone, and they expect to remain here permanently.

"You know, of course, that White's friend, Fullerton, came on here with him? *Veni, vidi, vici,* is to be said of him! Within a week of making his appearance in the Camp, he and Miss Travis went to Bakersfield where they were married, my wife and I going along to assist in the ceremony. The happy couple (I believe that's the way they're always alluded to in the papers) are at present in Los Angeles,—Mecca for all

desert sojourners,—but are expected back at the Camp almost any day now. Fullerton will remain a few weeks, and will then proceed to Bowlegs, leaving his wife here until autumn. My temperature has got around to normal again and seems disposed to stay there. There has been no fluctuation for the past two weeks and for the first time I'm beginning to believe that I'll pull through."

Forecasting the future, as was his wont, Branscombe's thoughts were occupied with a consideration of the results that might be obtained next winter when the Camp would be in good working order. If circumstances warranted it, he would put up more cottages, so as to have fifty people on the grounds. To keep the deficit down as much as possible he would have to manage the work systematically, in a businesslike way, as grandfather Larrimore had managed his business. He would have regular bookkeeping, with monthly trial balances; his purchases must be made in the best markets, and the ranch must be brought to the best state of efficiency. He already had his cattle, which would supply the milk and butter required for the Camp. His incubators were turning out chickens by the hundreds, many of which would be egg-producers the following winter. There was a competent ranchman in charge,

and he hoped that the ranch would eventually contribute most of the supplies required for the table.

He always believed that he had good business talent; that, had he inherited no money, had he been compelled to make his own way, he would have made a notable success as a business man. Now the opportunity was given him of putting the matter to the test; for this Camp project was like a business, the management of which called for good business qualifications. He was put on his mettle; he would have to make a good showing and justify his opinion of himself.

But there must be no economies which would in any way militate against securing the best results as regards the health of the invalids. Their welfare must be the first consideration. Should the deficit prove to be larger than he could meet, he might augment his income by engaging in some business, placing a good man in charge of the Camp.

And those without means should be given a chance. It might happen often enough that the money supply of one or the other would be temporarily cut off. In many cases it had to be earned first by the people at home. There was a case on the grounds where two brothers were being supported by a sister, who worked at dressmaking to do it.

Too early yet to make plans regarding the boy's career; but he would take good care not to endanger it by leaving him too much money, as his own had been. Larry must not waste his best years in idleness and listlessness. Better, much better, that they be spent in achieving a competency for himself.

Something which gratified Branscombe at this time was the reports which came to him regarding the Blakeslee painting, which he had sent on to Paris to the Master. In reply he had received a few lines in acknowledgment, with the assurance that it would be hung at the forthcoming exhibition of the *Salon*. Then had come press notices, and later a rapturous letter from the Master, in French, saying that it was not to be thought of to allow the picture to leave Paris, and would not Monsieur White put a price upon it? But Monsieur White, when the subject was broached to him at the Summer Camp, declined the proposition, saying he did not care to profit by his partner's gift. "This art of water-color is too rare as yet in France," wrote the Master in a subsequent letter. "It is a most exquisite art—in the right hands the work is finer, more ethereal than what has been done in oil. Such subtlety in the merging of tones I have never yet seen as is exhibited in this picture. We must be permitted to

keep it a while longer anyway." The matter was finally arranged by White consenting to loan the picture indefinitely, in consideration of which the Master made a gift of money to the Camp, which sum was to be applied toward paying the board of those without funds.

Branscombe spent many a pleasant hour these June evenings under the cottonwoods, his thoughts intent on the work in hand. Yes, he would make this his lifework! It had already brought him content, the little that he had done. And his character had widened, broadened, in the doing of it. In the illumination that came to him through helping the others in the Camp, he first came to realize the duty of the individual to the whole, and that it precedes his duty to himself. The individualism on which he had formerly so prided himself seemed now, in the light of this new knowledge that had come to him, only another name for egotism and selfishness leading nowhere.

Civilization itself, he came to see, has been achieved, not by each pursuing low and personal aims, but rather by the leading spirits, people of genius, discerning, clear-sighted, working steadily for the uplifting of humanity, contributing their quota toward the general well-being, relegating to the background their own petty personal aims, and

finding their felicity in doing so. So would it be with him. At last he was on the right road. The inward drama had come to an end, the mentor at his elbow silenced! He was at peace with himself, at peace with all the world. He felt now, though without abatement of his newly acquired humility, that he could justify his existence. Life at last had found a meaning.

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